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Maturin

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NEW

Paul

WOMEN;

OR,

POUR ET CONTRE.

by Mr Leonard

Dine & Dancy

D: 10 B. 45 E.
Oct. 1. 15.

WOMEN;

OR,

POUR ET CONTRE.

A TALE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "BERTRAM," &c.

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"'Tis good to be merry and wise,
'Tis good to be honest and true;
'Tis good to be off with the old love
Before you be on with the new."

Scotch Ballad.

By Charles R. Maturin.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.

FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND CO. EDINBURGH; AND LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN, LONDON.

1818.

PREFACE.

None of my former prose works have been popular. The strongest proof of which is, none of them arrived at a second edition; nor could I dispose of the copyright of any but of the "Milesian," which was sold to Mr Colburn for 80*l.* in the year 1811.

"Montorio" (misnomed by the bookseller "The Fatal Revenge," a very book-selling appellation) had some share of popularity, but it was only the popularity of circulating libraries: it deserved no better; the

date of that style of writing was out when I was a boy, and I had not powers to revive it. When I look over those books now, I am not at all surprised at their failure; for, independent of their want of *external* interest, (the strongest interest that books can have, even in this reading age,) they seem to me to want *reality*, vraisemblance; the characters, situations, and language, are drawn merely from imagination; my limited acquaintance with life denied me any other resource. In the Tale which I now offer to the public, perhaps there may be recognised some characters which experience will not disown. Some resemblance to common life may be traced in them. On this I rest for the most part the interest of the narrative. The paucity of characters and incidents (the absence of all that constitutes the interest of fictitious biography in general) excludes

the hope of this work possessing any other interest.

If this plain avowal of the want of effect in my former attempts does not mitigate the severity of critical animadversion, I have one more plea to offer, which I hope may prove not ineffectual, that it is the *last time* I ever shall trespass in *this way* on the indulgence of the public. One more attempt I shall make, and then address my "*valete*" to the audience, with little hope of being able to add, "*plaudite*."

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

COUNTESS OF ESSEX.

MADAM,

PERMIT me to express my gratitude for the honour you have conferred on me, in allowing me to dedicate this "Tale" to your Ladyship.

I could wish that its merits had rendered it more worthy of such a distinction; but the highest it can possess is derived from that condescension which enables me to grace it with the name of the Countess of Essex.

I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

Your Ladyship's grateful and

Obedient Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

WOMEN;

OR,

POUR ET CONTRE.

WOMEN;

OR,

POUR ET CONTRE.

CHAPTER I.

Ut mea sit, servata mea virtute, paciscor.

OVID.

CHARLES DE COURCY, the orphan heir to a respectable property in the south of Ireland, after having received a more than usually good education, in the house of a clerical gentleman, who was also one of his guardians, entered the university of Dublin, in November 1813, when he was about seventeen years of age.

What he was, or rather what his tutor thought he was, may be judged from a let-

ter written by that gentleman to the other guardian, a few days after his ward and pupil had quitted him.

After sundry details (which may be spared the reader,) concerning the settlement of accounts, and arangements for De Courcy's living in college, the letter proceeded thus :—

"I have now resigned my charge, but the interest I have always felt for him has been only increased by our separation. He has entered on the stage of life, and, qualified to sustain any part, even the first, I tremble to think that he may fall even to the lowest—'unstable as water, he may not excel.'—Nature and fortune seem to have done every thing for him—but what may he do with himself?—or rather, what may not *others* do with him?—almost what they please. The materials are inestimable, but they may be moulded either into a god, or a *terminus—incertus scamnum faceretne, anne—maluit esse Deum*—Generous, affec-

tionate, brave, with sensibility that every thing touches, genius that every thing inspires, cheerfulness that every thing can animate, simplicity that any thing can impose on. Such is the picture, but all pictures must have a reverse;—credulous, fluctuating, and irresolute, ever led by the last speaker,—ever obeying the fresh impulse,—false shame always suffered to act in the place of true,—the heart always consulted in disdain of the understanding,—the censure of the world dreaded less than its laugh,—and the reproaches of the heart coming too late for any thing but to increase his sufferings;—such is De Courcy.—Such *is* he! How can I tell at this moment what he is?—who can analyze to its original tint that which varies with every light and shade that wanders over its surface? Among intellectual men, he is all sparkling intelligence, and honourable ambition; among different characters, loudest of the loud, and lightest of the light; if seen in *his own light*, in his

natural character, abstracted from all external influence, the most amiable, affectionate, and unpretending of human beings. The mock-bird, you know, though said to derive his distinction from imitating the tones of others, is found by later naturalists to possess some notes of his own exquisitely sweet.

* * * * *

"There are but two things that can *fix* his character. The steady pursuit of literary eminence, for which he has enough of ambition, and more than enough of talent —or—(and far may that period be from him,) passion, to which I fear he will not long be a stranger. If he loves, love will fix his destiny, and perhaps fatally for himself; in every thing else, he may be *like the Eolian harp, answering in melody to every breeze that sweeps it.* But in this the master-chord will be heard, and the hand that touches it will unite every string in harmony, or break them. I will say no

more; he has had my efforts, my admonitions, my wishes, even my prayers. They will still be his; never did a being emerging into life give greater cause of hope and of fear. He may be any thing—he may be nothing—or worse than nothing.

"EVERARD ASGILL."

* * * * *

While Mr Asgill was writing, De Courcy was on his way to Dublin. A singular circumstance attended his journey. The coach in which he travelled broke down in passing through the town of Lucan; none of the passengers were hurt, but the coach was so shattered that it was impossible to proceed in it. This was about four o'clock of a November evening; the rest of the passengers chose to remain at Lucan, but Charles, learning it was not quite five miles to Dublin, determined to walk on. The evening was mild, and even beautiful; there was no moon, but the stars were already

beginning to twinkle brightly. We often have in Ireland winter nights that rival the beauty and softness of a summer one. It was past seven when he reached the outskirts of Dublin, and mistaking a direction given him at the entrance of Barrack-street, he crossed into the north-circular road, and, with the murmur and the lights of the city still before him, and appearing almost round him, he reached the Canal Bridge. He was alone; as he crossed it, he was startled by the cries of a female voice, piercing, but suddenly stopped;—he rushed forward,—a carriage thundering over the bridge passed him rapidly, and in a few moments the rolling of the wheels at a distance, as it pursued the way to the country, was the only sound to be heard.

There was not a passenger on the road; he stood for some moments uncertain what to do; courage was natural to him, but as yet he had had no opportunity to exercise it. There was no other passenger on the

road; and it was therefore certain, that the sounds of distress he heard must have proceeded from the carriage; he hurried after it. At the turnpike there was a short delay; but while it continued, the same cries, now evidently, though faintly, issuing from the carriage, struck on his ear. He redoubled his speed, hoping to be able to stop it at the turnpike; but the carriage went rapidly on, and the people at the gate, of whom he enquired, could only tell him that a gentleman within had given them a handful of silver in great haste; that there was a kind of struggle within; and that he had ordered the driver to go on at full gallop. De Courcy, hopeless of overtaking them, still pursued, when one of the horses, pushed beyond his speed, fell, and remaining entangled in the harness, by his utmost efforts he came up with them before they reached the gate of the Phœnix Park. The driver, and an out-rider, who had dismounted, were busy about the horse that

had fallen, and a man leaning out of the window was cursing their delay, when a female voice screamed audibly within, and De Courcy could distinctly see an arm extended from the window that was instantly and forcibly withdrawn, and the man in the carriage drew up the window, urging, with frightful imprecations, the driver to proceed. De Courcy attempted to force open the door, which was strongly held within; the driver, turning round, aimed a blow at him with the end of his whip, which was meant to stun him; De Courcy shunned it, closed with him, wrested it from him, and again attempted the door; but the man, in the mean time, was on his box, and the out-rider lashing on the horses with his own whip, they set off at full speed, though the plunging, halting gait of one of them indicated he had been lamed by his fall.

The carriage entered the Park. Charles hurried to the centinel at the gate, and ac-

quainted him with the facts, and with his fears, on which he laid much stronger stress. The centinel could not quit his post, but offered to alarm the guard. Charles then alone, entered on the Park road, utterly ignorant of its direction, and with nothing to guide him but the lessening sound of the carriage now rolling at a hopeless distance before him. So ignorant was he of the environs of Dublin, that he made his way out of the other Park-gate, and was on the Chapelizod road before he knew he had quitted it; then, about half a mile onward, a light, seen distinctly across the dark road, directed him to a cabin door, where a woman stood evidently looking, or trying to look, after some object she had lately seen.

"Did a carriage pass this way lately?" said De Courcy.

The woman answered there had; that it had stopped near her door in consequence of some accident that had happened to one

of the horses which appeared to be lame; that her son had been called out to assist in settling the harness; and she added, that a *gentleman* in the carriage had rewarded her so liberally, that "she did not know what to make of it;" and that he seemed so agitated, that, after giving her the money, he still continued to hold her hand with such force (all the time calling to the driver to hurry on) that she was dragged for some steps along with the carriage before he recollected himself, and released her.

De Courcy scarce waited to hear her; and, though now without hope or even object, and with strength nearly exhausted, once more hurried on to pursue he knew not what.

The darkness of the moonless night, and the speed with which he had walked (the utmost speed of a frame eminently active) had prevented his discovering, or even thinking, where he was; but at this moment the loud bell of the Royal Hospital

striking nine, and its sound instantly repeated by those of Stephens and Swift in solemn accordance, reminded him that he must have wandered in a circuit, as he was still so near to Dublin. The sound, augmented by the dead stillness of the night, seemed to him the most awful he had ever heard, and at that moment a striking passage in Clarkson's Account of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade rushed on his memory; it was that in which he describes the effect of the bells of the city of Bristol ringing out as he approached it—approached it with a purpose so hostile to its wealth, its power, and its crime; he describes its effect like that of an awful challenge to his spirit, a summons to a conflict, of which he had never fully felt the magnitude or weight before.

De Courcy listened till the last sound died away; and, pausing to catch its echo, saw a gleam of light appear and vanish near him, and he turned in the direction, and

saw a woman with a light in her hand enter a house at a short distance—He followed her—the door was instantly shut—he knocked at it—no answer—the light within disappeared. His feelings were alive to every suspicion at this moment; and, unable to consult any thing but his feelings, he obeyed them with a kind of blind confidence. He knocked again; and, receiving no answer, burst the door open in a moment; a cry, fearfully smothered, and quick short breathing near him instantly followed, and he felt that either he or the inhabitants of the place had something to fear from each other. All was dark at first; but in a few seconds there came a gloomy indistinct glare from the turf-embers that burned on the hearth, that still shewed nothing but the earthen floor and the rafted roof, leaving the walls in complete obscurity. No human creature was to be seen—Charles paused—the deep stifled breathing increased—at last, a voice near him, the

speaker still unseen, whispered, "Is that the *min*?"

Charles, who knew not what to answer, advanced; a woman then started forward from a dark corner, and stood wildly before him, as if wishing to oppose him, she knew not how. She was a frightful and almost supernatural object; her figure was low, and she was evidently very old, but her muscular strength and activity were so great, that, combined with the fantastic wildness of her motions, it gave them the appearance of the gambols of a hideous fairy. She was in rags, yet their arrangement had something of a picturesque effect. Her short tattered petticoats, of all colours, and of various lengths, depending in angular shreds, her red cloak hanging on her back, and displaying her bare bony arms, with hands whose veins were like ropes, and fingers like talons; her naked feet, with which, when she moved, she stamped, jumped, and beat the earth like

an Indian squaw in a war-dance; her face *tattooed* with the deepest indentings of time, want, wretchedness, and evil passions; her wrinkles, that looked like channels of streams long flowed away; the eager motion with which she shook back her long matted hair, that looked like strings of the grey bark of the ash tree, while eyes flashed through them whose light seemed the posthumous offspring of deceased humanity,—her whole appearance, gestures, voice, and dress, made De Courcy's blood run cold within him. They gazed on each other for some time, as if trying to make out each other's purpose, from faces dimly seen, till the woman, whose features seemed kindling by the red light into a fiend-like glare, appeared to discover that he was not the person whom she expected, and cried, in a voice at once shrill and hollow, like a spent blast, "What is it brought you here?"—and before he could answer, rushing forward, stood with her back against

a door, (which but for this motion he would not have observed,) and waving her lean nervous arms, exclaimed fiercely,—"Come no farther, at your peril."

This attitude and tone of defiance roused De Courcy,—"At my peril, then," said he; but he recollected that he had to contend with a woman, and attempted gently, but firmly, to remove her from the door. This he found no easy task; the beldame grappled with the strength of a fury, and it was only by his utmost exertions that he succeeded in tearing her from it. A faint murmur within, as if proceeding from some one disturbed by the noise of the struggle, reached his ear as at length he flung the door open. A wretched candle threw its dim light (too dim to be discovered before) on a pallet and a figure in white that lay extended on it. The spotless white of the drapery made a strange contrast to the darkness, filth, and misery around it. De Courcy approached;—it was a female; the face was

averted, and one arm was flung wildly over the head, but ringlets of luxuriant dishevelled hair, that even in the darkness gleamed like gold, were scattered over the shoulder, descending almost to the slender waist, and half the pale cheek, lovely even in apparent death, was seen beneath it. A gush of pity, horror, and indignation, swelled in De Courcy's throat;—he could not speak—he could not approach—he leaned for support against the wretched bed on which she lay unconsciously. She was young,—how young and how lovely that lovely hair and slender milky arm told him as he hung over her. What she must have suffered to be there—what might she not have suffered since she came or had been dragged there! Her present insensibility seemed manifestly the stupor of illness or terror. He spoke to her, though he scarce knew what he said, but she gave no answer. He attempted, as he thought, to raise her, but his touch was too feeble to

have raised a far lighter weight, though he felt that even his touch was something like profanation. She fell like a corpse from his arms, but as she fell, a few indistinct reluctant sounds announced, that though life was apparently suspended, it was not extinguished.

At this moment the hag approached the door, and stood without entering, bending backwards and forwards, like a tigress collecting force for a spring. De Courcy looked at her for a moment; there was nothing human or hopeful about her; but the dread that she might have assistants near, made him risk an appeal even to her. He caught her arm and attempted to lead her towards the sufferer; she struggled to get loose from him, fearing, like all who intend an injury, that some was intended to her. He released her, and with an appealing look pointed to the bed. The woman hesitated, and De Courcy, thinking he knew the cause of her hesitation, promised

her secresy and an ample reward, if she assisted him in removing the lady, or even in not obstructing their escape. Her wild, but meaning eye, was strongly fixed on him while he spoke, and she burst into a laugh of frantic derision, in whose "madness, however, there was meaning."

"And you would give money for her soul, would you? and for my soul, too?—you would; but I am no Judas. I won't sell her for your thirty pieces of silver. I have watched for her, I have sought her, I have bought her. I watched in day and in darkness. I waded through tears and blood for her;—she is mine. Do not touch her;—she is bought with the price that you can never pay. Oh! they were weary hours till I paid her price. I paid it on the mountain—I paid it on the bog—I paid it on the road when I begged—in their dark holes, where they kept me screeching, and told me I was mad—in their prisons, where they kept me starving

and said I was a vagabond. Vagabond and mad as I was, I won her from them all, and I'll keep her;—I was weak, but God was strong. I had that glory from God to laugh at them and tread on them; tread on life and death to save her;—and I have saved her through the power of the Cross, and the power of the Holy Mary, and of all the blessed holy saints.—*Ora pro nobis, Sancta Maria.—Ora pro nobis, sancte diabole.* No, no,—that was the tempter's doing;—he takes the words out of my mouth, and the grace out of my heart, and there he stands grinning and mocking—*a-page satana—ora pro nobis Domine Jesu*—that's it, that's it—that's the word. I wanted it, but Satan sent it far away. Let me kiss the Cross—ha, ha, ha! Why do you offer that great black claw?—ha, ha, ha!—that's the tempter."

In an agony of supernatural excitement, she flung herself on her knees, and inarticulately repeated some Latin prayers, mix-

ed with the frequent use of the sign of the Cross. If the state of De Courcy's feelings could have allowed him to glance at any object but that he was trying ineffectually to raise and support, the figure before him must have fixed his whole attention. She was kneeling, indeed; but her expression and attitude denoted execration, not prayer. She seemed to be uttering those "blessings of the evil genii which are curses;" her very rags seemed to quiver and rise on her body from the intensity of her feelings; her grey matted hairs actually did, as in the eagerness of her motions the red handkerchief that bound them fell off, and showed them in all their deformity of streaming hoariness;—her luminous dilated eyes rolled rapidly and obliquely in their sockets, as if in search of certain objects concealed from human sight; and the quick motion of her white shrivelled lips seemed to mutter a spell, not an address to Heaven.

De Courcy looked on her for a moment with horror, and then conceiving that this paroxysm, in which she seemed unconscious of her own existence, might be favourable to the escape of the prisoner, raised her light weight in his arms in one moment, and bore her out of the room. The hag sprung from her knees and caught hold of the young female; till that moment the latter had not shewed the least sensibility, but at that touch she seemed to revive with a kind of abhorrent instinct, clung to De Courcy with all her strength, and hid her face in his bosom. Her clasp, though twined round him in unconscious and convulsive horror, seemed to send fire through all his veins. He broke from the grasp of the woman, and rushed from the hovel. The woman followed and seized his hand, which he could not release for some minutes; her preceding strength had been evidently that of frenzy, and was now gradually relaxing; yet still she held his hand, and poring over

it with a witchlike eagerness, exclaimed, as she examined its lines,—"Ay, ay, it is white and soft—white enough, yet there is black in every line of it to the eyes that can see it, the blackness that is blacker than death. It is as soft as a woman's, and yet it can deal a heavy blow—the blow that kills what it never touched—the blow that breaks the heart. Others are deadly to them they hate, but you will be deadly to them you love!—Take her, take her from me if you will, but take my curse with you; it will be heavier on your heart than her weight is on your arm. I never cursed the grass but it withered, or the sky but it grew dark, or the living creatures but they pined and wasted away. Now you bear her away like a corpse in your arms, and I see you following her corpse to the church-yard, and the white ribbons tying her shroud; her maiden name on her tomb-stone; no child to cry for her, and you that sent her to her grave wishing it was dug for you."

She continued her maledictions with such frightful loudness and vehemence, that De Courcy still heard and shuddered at them, though now he was at a considerable distance from the hovel. The road which he took (scarce knowing where to go) lay between the Park wall and the river. The low fields on the banks of the Liffey, with their hedges level to the road, and their flat expanse giving no shelter, left him no hope of escape if they were pursued. A carriage came on rapidly behind him, and contrasting the appearance and dress of the young female (whom he still bore in his arms,) with the wretched state of the hovel where he had found her, and of the woman in whose power she was, he immediately conceived that other hands must have placed her there, and that he might have to contend with more than the frantic witch-like being, whose curses still rung in his ears, before he could save her.

They were now, however, near Dublin,

and he recollected that the lodge at the Park-gate might afford them shelter before they reached it. The swift approach of the carriage, and several voices, as of men accompanying it, all engaged in enquiry, and rapidly exchanging oaths and reproaches among each other, convinced him that some danger was near, from which he had no means of protecting his helpless burthen. He retreated, and tried to conceal himself and her among the thick bushes that cluster below the Park wall; he sunk on his knees, and withheld his very breath. The carriage came on, stopped, and the lights of lanterns glanced across the road. Several voices eagerly enquired, "Where she was?" and among them that of the old woman was heard; but she spoke in Irish, and De Courcy could only collect some imprecations familiar to the ears of all who have heard the lower orders in Ireland speak.

All this went on within ten yards of

where De Courcy lay concealed; yet this moment of terror and danger was the most delicious of his existence; for the young female at this moment, revived by the air or by the motion, clasped her white arms closer round him, and murmured some inarticulate sounds. It was the first proof of existence she had given, yet De Courcy trembled lest the sound of her voice, faint as it was, might reach the ears of those whom he dreaded to be her pursuers; and, with hands almost convulsed with the effort, he dared to press her closer to his bosom, to hush the whisper that she breathed. There was a dead silence on the road; the lights continued there, and their red glare fell strongly on the very bushes where De Courcy lay concealed. A short consultation was held (which seemed to him to last for ever;)—then the far-off rolling of the carriage-wheels, and the parting light, as it sunk in the distance, announced all was safe. The woman loitered some time af-

ter the rest, and with the inconsistency of madness, was singing a fragment of an Irish ballad, evidently of monkish composition, and of which the air has all the monotonous melancholy of the chaunt of the cloister:—

> "Oh I wish you were along with me,
> Said the *false knight*, as he rode;
> And *our Lord in company*,
> Said the child, and he stood."

"Where's the next?" she muttered; "ay—gone far off, like all I remembered once—far off.

> "Oh, I wish you were in yonder well,
> Said the false knight, as he rode;
> And you in the pit of hell,
> Said the child, and he stood."

And her voice died away in indistinct mutterings.

De Courcy did not lose a moment now; the light burthen in his arms felt like a

feather, and it was scarce possible for human foot to traverse the ground with the rapidity of his, till he reached the lodge at the Park-gate. She neither moved nor breathed, and at times he doubted fearfully whether it was the strong pulsation of his own heart he mistook for her's, or whether her's was throbbing with life. It was some time before he could rouse the people, and when he did, their astonishment at seeing a stranger, supporting in his arms an insensible female, of whom he could give no account, and of whose very name he was ignorant, prevented them at first from applying the means for her recovery; they stared on him and each other in stupid amazement.

De Courcy entreated one of them to hasten to Dublin for any conveyance that could be procured, and, placing her on a seat, knelt before her. Her cold extended hands, closed eyes, white lips, and rigid frame, filled him, as he gazed, with un-

speakable horror. Water was the only restorative the people had to offer; but they made their turf-fire blaze in a moment, and when by its light they saw the beautiful and innocent creature that lay apparently lifeless before them, a cry of pity and horror burst from them all, and they eagerly employed themselves in every means for her recovery that well-meaning ignorance could suggest. Simple as these means were, they proved effectual, and De Courcy at last beheld the colour of life tinging her cheeck, with a hue as faint as that in the bell of a hyacinth. As returning animation slowly pervaded her frame, De Courcy gazed, and thought that its like had never before been beheld on earth. She seemed scarce beyond the age of childhood, and there appeared about her an etherial lightness and purity, a visible sanctity, that even in that helpless state made her appear as scarce

"Of the earth—earthly."

Her eyes opened slowly, and wandered for some time without discrimination on the objects round her; but the kneeling figure of De Courcy, his locked hands, and his speaking eyes, soon pointed out her preserver among the group.

Certainly man never appears to woman under so interesting an aspect as that of her protector; even the roughest form and manners do not repel the most delicate woman, when associated with this idea; but when it is accompanied by a form whose beauty and tenderness (like De Courcy's) are almost feminine, the contrast of such qualities augments their value, and one feels for such an object almost all that could be inspired by both sexes in each other. With a feeling, that even the novelty of her situation could not repel, she spread out her white hands to him, and exclaimed, "Oh! how much, how much do I owe you!"

De Courcy heard with that silent delight that cannot answer; he bowed to the

earth before her, and pressing his lips to the edge of her white garment, felt a relief in sinking from her sight, and shutting out the intoxicating sound of her voice. Exhausted by the effort, the young female fell back, and closing her eyes and reclining her head, seemed to sink into a state between repose and insensibility.

Suddenly the sound of a carriage was heard; the party held their breath in terror; the woman dexterously extinguished the light; there was a dead silence for some moments; at last the welcome voice of the messenger from Dublin was heard. The door was opened immediately, and an elderly man, of no very prepossessing appearance, entered, and addressed the lady as his niece. She was for some time unable to answer him, and he turned to the people of the lodge for explanation; but they could give him none. There was something very singular in his manner, which struck De Courcy, agitated as he

was; he neither expressed terror, pity, wonder, or affection, but he was profuse in his acknowledgments to the Deity, and these were delivered in a measured and technical phrase, which seemed to be ready prepared in his memory, and to cost him little effort to repeat. Of De Courcy he took no notice, and De Courcy felt no wish to obtrude himself on it. It was only when he was supporting his niece to the carriage, that she turned round, and pointing to De Courcy, with a gesture whose emphasis could not be mistaken, forced the attention of her uncle towards him.

There was an eloquent reproach in her appealing look, that roused him reluctantly. He turned to De Courcy, and muttered some ungracious sounds of obligation, concluding by offering him a seat in the carriage to Dublin. De Courcy bowed proudly, and felt disposed to decline his offer; but acute and increasing pain in his head and back, which he then ascribed to

fatigue, compelled him to accept the repulsive invitation. When they were in the carriage, the uncle (whose name he had neither heard or enquired,) informed him he had been in search of his niece, whose *disappearance at evening prayers* had alarmed the family, when he had *providentially* met in the street the young man who had been sent to Dublin for the carriage. From a conversation he overheard between him and the coachman, he suspected the truth, and, accompanying him down, discovered his niece. To this explanation De Courcy listened with little interest; his pains were becoming excruciating, accompanied with a violent pulsation in his temples; the niece never spoke, though frequently called on by her uncle to "*lift up her voice and praise the Lord for her deliverance.*"

The carriage stopt in a street, of which De Courcy did not know the name or direction; the sullen, half-muttered expression of a wish to see him at their abode, to

"*join in thanksgiving for the mercy of which he had been the instrument,*" he hardly heard, and hurried to the hotel where he was to pass the night in a state of feverish suffering, which his mental agitation was momently exasperating.

In the morning he was delirious: the seeds of a fever had been lurking in his constitution, and now burst forth with violence. Of many young men whom he had known in the country, and who had professed to look forward with such delight to the renewal of their intercourse in Dublin, not one approached his sick bed; and, in spite of medical skill, he might have perished from the want of those numberless nameless attentions, more needful to sickness than medicine itself, had it not been for the care of a young man, who, till then, had never professed any particular friendship for De Courcy.

His name was Montgomery; a serious young man, whom his acquaintance ridi-

culed as a Methodist: he took his patient steady station beside De Courcy's infected bed, and never quitted it till the sufferer was restored to every thing but strength. It was a singular circumstance, that, on his recovery, he found that the delirium of his fever had obliterated every trace of that eventful night, except the image of the young female. Of the place where he found her, her name, her residence, he could not recal a single idea; while of her form, her face, her motion, and the few words she had murmured, he retained an impression so vivid and distinct, that it tormented him with its contrasted clearness. His confused and clouded memory seemed to darken the back-ground of the painting, to make every line and tint of its beautiful subject shine out with the brightness of reality. For hours he thought upon that night, vainly trying to grasp one accompanying idea. Sometimes in despair he gave up the whole as a vision, and often he felt as if she was

still in his arms. He had never mentioned the circumstance to any one; and his involuntary doubts of its reality were strengthened by the silence of *the other party*. Neither uncle, or niece, (if such persons existed,) had ever made an enquiry about him.

"Singular neglect, if it was not all a dream!" said De Courcy to himself.

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wished him well. The sermon ended; and the hymn, in which many of the congregation joined, began.

Close to De Courcy, the tones of a voice more soft, more rich, more plaintive, and more pure, than it seemed possible for human organs to utter, "rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes." Ignorant of music as a science, but "tremblingly alive" to its influence, he listened;—the voice, strengthening with the joining voices of the congregation, and aided by the swell of the organ, sounded so distinctly, that De Courcy, starting, for the first time perceived a young female standing beside him, whose simple dress, low stature, and slight figure, had hitherto escaped his observation. Her face was completely concealed by her large bonnet, and her figure lost in a dark pelisse, and her whole appearance was so petite and obscure, that De Courcy bent to listen whether those delicious sounds were indeed uttered by her.

As he leaned near her, the young female, with that liberty which seems to inspire confidence, but not to express it, offered him her hymn-book, and pointing with her white finger to the page, pursued her sacred song with as little emotion as if her sister held the other leaf. De Courcy bent over the book, which was so small that their hands almost touched each other; his eyes, fixed on the white fairy fingers so near, wandered over the lines without distinguishing them;—that thrilling voice so close to him, those tones that seemed to turn the very air into music, gave him sensations of delight, such as Milton felt when he said, "*Intremuit læto florea terra sono.*" He did not wish for some moments to catch a glimpse of her face—he felt as if the present moment were to last for ever—as if the sounds which he then heard were never to cease. It was only at the conclusion of the hymn (when the lady attempting to withdraw the book, which he still

held unconsciously, looked up with a slight expression of surprise) that he beheld a countenance which gleamed on him like a vision of the past. The ringlets of pale gold, curling like the untortured locks of childhood, falling over her cheek, like the shade of brilliant foliage over a bed of blossoms; the eyes of Heaven's own blue, in which every feeling of the pure heart was written, and not a feeling that might not be avowed to men and angels; the lips, over whose young roses no breath but of devotion had ever sighed; her whole aspect reflecting the mild glory of that holy harmony, whose last notes trembled on her half-open lips, and her glance so suddenly raised, so suddenly withdrawn,—he recognised all—it was herself—the very female he had saved!—She evidently did not know him,—he was much altered by his illness, and this was the first time he thought or felt he was. He still continued to gaze on her, as we watch the sleep of a beautiful

infant, delighted with its calm unconscious beauty, and feeling that when it awakes it will turn to us with looks of love.

The congregation were dispersing; the elderly lady and her young companion made several unassisted attempts to open the pew-door; at length De Courcy recollected himself, and attempted to assist them, but his trembling hands only increased the difficulty, and Montgomery, who was in the aisle, was obliged to release the party. As they went out, the young lady, with a motion that seemed rather the result of religious benignity than of worldly courtesy, turned and slightly bowed to De Courcy. He saw once more those eyes that breathed of heaven; and the unuttered sound that trembled on her lip had more of sweetness than any that courtly politeness ever breathed or dictated; and the grace of her fairy form, as it glided down the aisle, left him without power to follow her but with his eyes.

"I am much altered," said he to himself, "yet *she* might have known me;" and a feeling like pride mingled in his determination not to claim her notice. He watched her;—she turned and looked steadily at him;—a smile of bright and timid pleasure trembled over her beautiful features for a moment, the next she appeared to grow very weak, and caught the arm of the elderly lady for support, while she feebly extended one hand towards De Courcy. He rushed forward and caught it; the elderly lady appeared alarmed, and Montgomery looked on in silent amazement; for some moments he thought that De Courcy's delirium had returned, and a considerable time elapsed before a short and hurried explanation introduced them to each other. There was much embarrassment in the manner of the elderly lady as she indistinctly alluded to the eventful night of Eva's danger, and pressed De Courcy to al-

low her family an opportunity of expressing their gratitude to him under their own roof. Charles bowed in silent delight, and they then separated.

De Courcy wandered away alone; he wished to be far from the city, from its inhabitants, from all mankind if possible. At length he felt himself in the country; the cold clear splendour of a winter night was around him; he was at last alone with his own heart, and its new-born inmate, passion in its first purity and brightness. He communed with himself and was still. Oh, what gleams of heaven burst on the soul in such a moment, when creation seems renewed, and we awake to an existence so new, so bright, so delicious, that the very elements seem to harmonize with our feelings; and the stars, and heaven itself, appear to hold a silent alliance with the thoughts that are burning within us! He looked round him, and the earth, though in dark-

ness, appeared lovelier to him than in the brightest noon of a summer's day. He looked upward, and wondered that the stars had never appeared so resplendent to him before. He sighed, and felt respiration itself a delight. He tried a thousand times to utter some name that seemed at the bottom of his heart, but knew not what name to call on;—his whole mind seemed but one idea—his whole existence but one feeling;—a glow like that of summer pervaded his whole frame, and he trembled with a grateful consciousness of life he had never known before. It was so late when he awoke from his delirium, that he found on his arrival at the College the gates were shut. One might have supposed his situation comfortless enough as he leaned against the iron railing till the gates were opened; but those moments were perhaps the most delicious of his existence. What dreams were his?—The dreams that passion sheds

but once on the heart before its purity has received a tinge from the senses, or its ardour can anticipate the possibility of disappointment or infelicity!

CHAPTER III.

Πικρὰ δ' ἐρώτος πλήθομαι.

EURIPIDES.

THE next day, at an early hour, De Courcy was in Dominick Street; he easily discovered the house—it was a handsome, but a very grave-looking one. The name of "Wentworth" was on the door. There are some houses that seem to bespeak their inhabitants, and De Courcy had a kind of feeling that this was one of them, at the moment he touched the knocker. He was shewn into a room furnished plainly, but in a manner that shewed if luxuries were wanting, wealth certainly was not, and in a few minutes Mrs Wentworth entered the room. He had now leisure to observe her, and the bare circumstance of her being an inmate in the same house with that object,

gave an indescribable interest to the observation. She appeared about fifty years of age; her person was plain; but her clear commanding eye, the severe simplicity of her manners, and a consciousness of perfect sincerity accompanying every word she uttered, and communicating itself irresistibly to her hearers, made one respect her the moment they beheld her, and love her a very few moments afterwards. Withdrawn and recollected from the embarrassment of the preceding night, her manner appeared comparatively cold, but it was rather the coldness of habit than of character; there was more, too, of the measured and limited phraseology of the evangelical people in her conversation; but when she continued to speak for any time, one easily saw that the range of her mind was far more extensive than that of the objects to which it was confined. She herself appeared to feel this self-imposed constraint, and to escape from it from time to time, but soon return-

ed again; and the final impression which she left was that of strong sense, rigid rectitude of principle and conduct, and a temper and heart naturally warm, but subdued by the power of religion.

She expressed herself with earnest gratitude to De Courcy for the preservation of her niece, and then made the most minute and searching enquiries into the events of that strange night. During the detail which De Courcy gave, she was so much agitated, that he would have paused had she not urged him to go on, with an earnestness very remote from curiosity.

"And can you possibly, madam," said De Courcy, "guess at the authors or the motives of this outrage?" Mrs Wentworth was silent.—"It is a most mysterious proceeding," said De Courcy, anxious to relieve himself from this embarrassing silence.

"There is a mystery," said Mrs Wentworth, speaking almost involuntarily, and

while she spoke she shewed so much agitation, that the subject was dropped as if by mutual and tacit consent.

The silence that followed was broke by the entrance of Mr Wentworth, in whom De Courcy recognized the uncle. The appearance of this man almost dissolved the spell which appears to us to hang over every object dwelling under the roof of those we love, and attracts the heart irresistibly, even to inanimate things, which they have consecrated by a touch or a look. His manners were repulsive, his understanding narrow, and his principles inflexibly rigid; his mind was rather tenacious than strong; what little he knew, he knew thoroughly, and what he once acquired he retained for ever. Early in life he had made a large fortune with a spotless character, and having retired from business, found his mind utterly vacant; by the persuasion of his wife, he was induced to listen to the evangelical preachers, and (as I

is often the case with converts either in early youth or in advanced life,) in a short time he far outwent his preceptors. Calvinism, Calvinism was every thing with him; his expertness in the five points would have foiled even their redoubtable refuter, Dr Whitby himself; but his theology having obtained full possession of his head, seemed so satisfied with its conquest, that it never ventured to invade his heart. His mind was completely filled with a system of doctrines, and his conversation with a connexion of phrases, which he often uttered mechanically, but sometimes with a force that imposed not only on others, but on himself. In this state he was perhaps as happy as he could be, for he had a gratifying sense of his own importance, and his conscience was kept tranquil by listening to or repeating sounds, which to him had all the effect of things. Never was Mirabeau's acute remark, that "words are things," more

strongly verified than in the case of Mr. Wentworth's religion.

Mrs Wentworth introduced them to each other, and, hoping to warm her husband's coldness, was loud in her praises of De Courcy's courage and humanity. Mr Wentworth listened with the impatient air of a man who is waiting to speak himself; and then turning to De Courcy, exhorted him to consider himself under every dispensation, whether of providence or grace, as the humble and worthless instrument of Divine Power.

"I trust, young man, that you consider yourself (though the preserver of my niece,) as not a jot higher in the divine eye than those who were probably leagued against her life. They may yet be as brands snatched from the burning, and so, through Divine Power, may you."

De Courcy, unused to this language, could only answer by silent blushes and bows; but these bows and blushes became

him much, and Wentworth at once set him down as a convert. Mrs Wentworth, who felt as much for her husband as for him, was beginning to express her regret that her niece could not thank him in person, and her surprise that so long an interval had elapsed previous to his introduction, when Montgomery entered the room, and enquired after Eva with all the familiarity of *l'ami du famille.*

De Courcy felt thunderstruck. By a tenacity as strong as it was unaccountable, he had never mentioned to Montgomery the events of that extraordinary night. It floated in his imagination like a vision; and Montgomery, occupied by his attention to his patient, had never believed that any intercourse existed between him and the Wentworth family, till their brief and singular introduction at the Bethesda Chapel, the preceding evening. Mrs Wentworth answered his enquiries after Eva, and then, apparently forcing herself to give some ac-

count of De Courcy being present, said, in a low voice and hesitating manner, that the family owed him unspeakable obligations for the services he had rendered Eva. Montgomery instantly extended his hand in frank and cordial gratitude, though he was totally unconscious of the nature of the services alluded to. De Courcy gave his in return, but it was with a coldness he could not account for; the ardour of Montgomery's enquiries had infused a chillness into him, which, while he disdained himself for, he could not resist. At this moment they would have been delighted to have exchanged situations; Montgomery would have wished to be her preserver, and De Courcy to be her friend. He soon after retired, not without a warm invitation from Mrs Wentworth to dine with them on the following day; it was as sincerely, though not as warmly repeated by Mr Wentworth, and De Courcy accepted it with a delight he dared not express.

"We do not live in the world," said Mrs Wentworth, in a qualifying manner; "there are only grave quiet people to be with us; but at your age I trust you are rather governed by your feelings than by the world in your choice of society."

"I trust," said Wentworth, "he is governed by neither, but by grace." And so they parted.

The next day he dined at Dominick-Street, and found that Mrs Wentworth's qualifying manner was not without a meaning, for he was introduced to a class of society whom he had never before met with. A large evangelical party dined at the house, (for the evangelical people remunerate themselves for renouncing the mixed assemblies of the world by frequent meetings among themselves,) and the men and women were unlike any men and women De Courcy had ever encountered before. The women all dressed with the utmost simplicity, with absolute plainness, arms

covered to the wrists, and necks to the ears; no distinction of appearance between maid and matron, except that the former wore their hair very simply arranged; and the latter, however young, had their heads invariable covered. The men—they neither paid the general attention to women that is usual in mixed companies, nor separated in groups to talk of politics; they sat apart "on their chairs sublime, in thought more elevate, and reasoned high." De Courcy heard terms used by them, some of which he did not understand, and others which he did, he thought quite unfit for loose and general discussion. He felt himself quite disconsolate; and approaching a gentleman who stood leaning against one of the windows, he ventured a few observations on the position of the allied armies, then sufficiently interesting and critical, for *it was in the close of the eventful year* 1813.

"Very true, sir," said the gentleman,

with a contraction of countenance that appeared to De Courcy quite pantomimic, "very true; you are speaking of the downfal of the power of Buonaparte, but have you ever thought of the means of overthrowing the power of Satan, and extending the kingdom of Christ?"

Dinner was announced at the end of this triumphant sentence,—the party mixed,—the dinner was excellent, but without parade; the first course contained the substance of two or three more splendid but less substantial. De Courcy remarked particularly the man who had rebutted him just as they went down to dinner. He was tall, but very ungraceful; a strange consciousness of importance mingled itself most uncouthly with his coarse figure and awkward manners; his hair was red; his eye small, but keen and piercing; his voice powerful, but not melodious; most repulsively softened when he addressed females, to whom, however, he paid obvious atten-

tion. He never spoke but on one subject, and on that his eloquence was overpowering, and his information profound, but it was only on one side; he was a sturdy orthodox Calvinist, skilful in argument, vehement in declamation, and amply equipped with weapons from the old armoury of Geneva, well furbished by modern artists, which he wielded with equal force and dexterity. But his manners, his habits of disputation, and even his pulpit oratory, powerful as it was, were strongly tinged with the original vulgarity of his origin and nature.

He was the son of a poor labourer, the tenant of a wealthy gentleman in Cork, whose wife was evangelical; she instructed the children of her husband's tenants in her own system; her husband gave her no disturbance; he followed his fox-hounds all day, and damned his wife's Methodism over his claret all night. The good lady went her own way, and discovering in this

lad, maugre his fierce red hair and bare broad feet, evident marks of his being "a growing and gracious character;" and astonished at the fluency and eloquence with which he repeated his acquired creed, and gave the word of exhortation to his ragged family, wondering round the mud-walls of his native cabin, and exhorted the old women (who, gossipping, squabbling, and even drinking forty yards distant from the chapel door, fell on their knees in the mire at the tinkling of the bell which announced the elevation of the Host) to turn from the error of their ways, and seek the Lord.—She proposed a subscription among her friends to enable him to enter the university, and be qualified "to minister at the altar."

The subscription went on zealously, and young Macowen entered College; but when once there, *his views*, as they were called, expanded so rapidly, that no Church Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Independent, had

the good fortune precisely to suit his sentiments in orthodoxy of system, or purity of discipline. Thus he moved a splendid and erratick meteor, shedding his light on the churches as he passed, but defying them all to calculate his orbit, or ascertain his direction. In the mean time, it had been suggested to him that many evangelical females, of large fortune, would not be unwilling to share his fate. This hint, often repeated and readily believed, threw a most odious suavity into his manner; his overblown vulgar courtesy was like the flowers of the poppy, all glare and stench. Under these circumstances, he had become the intimate of the Wentworth family; and from the moment he beheld Eva, his feelings were what he could not describe, and would not account for even to himself, but what he was determined implicitly to follow. His system took part with his inclinations, and in a short time he believed it a duty to im press her with the conviction that her sal-

vation must depend on her being united with him. When a perverted conscience is in league with the passions, their joint influence is irresistible.

There is, among the evangelical people, an establishment something like the Court of Wards, abolished under James the First; a determination to dispose of wealthy unmarried females to distinguished professors or preachers, who are not equally favoured by fortune; and the families of the former conceive themselves not only honoured, but benefited by the exchange. Thus the evangelical system is rapidly assuming the aspect of the papal, and, by the union of intellectual influence with actual wealth, bids fair to rival it in power as well as in pretensions. On this Macowen relied much, and, strange to say, on his personal advantages still more. He had been strongly recommended to the Wentworths, and held in the family something like the office of director in a Catholic continental family; but from the moment he beheld De

Courcy, he felt his influence shaken. His beauty, his youth, his distinguished services, —the enthusiasm of feeling that trembled in his light and graceful form,—the broken music of his firm mellow voice, as he addressed even the relatives of Eva,—the deep but vanishing crimson of his cheek, as for a moment, at the end of his hurried enquiry after her, his eye fell on herself,—and the sudden dropping of his white eyelids, with their rich, dark, humid fringe, through which the eye spoke more than words could utter—all this Macowen saw, and looked at him askance, "with jealous leer malign." The dinner went on; the men and women, seated alternately, spoke of their popular preachers, and of popular works of evangelical divinity, and of eloquent speeches made at the meetings of the Bible Society, and of the diffusion of the gospel throughout Ireland; and they uttered sundry strictures on the parochial clergy who opposed the circulation of evan-

gelical tracts, with many a by-blow at the contrast between the Calvinistic articles of the Church of England, and the Arminian creed of her modern sons.

Such was the conversation; and when the women retired, it was not a whit more enlarged. One man talked incessantly of the "election of grace," his mind literally seemed not to have room for another idea; every sentence, if it did not begin, ended with the same phrase, and every subject only furnished matter for its introduction. Dr Thorpe's last sermon at Bethesda was spoken of in terms of high and merited panegyric.

"Very true," said he; "but—a—a—Did you think there was enough of election in it?"

A late work of the same author (his clever pamphlet on the Catholic petition) was mentioned.

"But does he say any thing of election in it?"

"There was no opportunity," said Mr Wentworth.

"Then he should have made one—Ah, I would give very little for a book that did not assert the election of grace!"

Once seated in his election-saddle, he posted on with alarming speed, and ended with declaring, that Elisha Coles, on God's Sovereignty, was worth all the divinity that ever was written. "I have a large collection of the works of godly writers," said he, turning to De Courcy, "but not one work that ever was, would I resign for that of Elisha Coles."

"Won't you except the Bible?" said De Courcy, smiling.

"Oh, yes—the Bible—ay, to be sure, the Bible," said the discomfited champion of election; "but still, you know"—and he continued to mutter something about Elisha Coles, on God's Sovereignty.

Another, who never stopped talking, appeared to De Courcy a complete evangeli-

cal *time-keeper*;—the same ceaseless ticking sound;—the same vacillating motion of the head and body; and his whole conversation turning on the various lengths of the sermons he had heard, of which, it appeared, he was in the habit of listening to four every Sunday.

"Mr Matthias preached exactly forty-eight minutes. I was at Mr Cooper's exhortation at Plunket-street in the evening, and it was precisely fifty-three minutes."

"And how many seconds?" said Mrs Wentworth, smiling, for she felt the ridicule of this.

Close to De Courcy were two very young men, who were comparing the respective progress they had made in the conversion of some of their relations. They spoke on this subject with a familiarity that certainly made De Courcy start.

"My aunt is almost entirely converted," said one. "She never goes to church now, though she never missed early prayers at

St Thomas's for forty years before. Now," with a strange tone of triumph, "now, is your sister converted as much as that?"

"Yes—yes—she is," answered the other eagerly; "for* she burned her Week's Preparation yesterday, and my mother's too along with it."

The other was dumb at this incontrovertible mark of conversion. De Courcy felt shocked; for he thought, however opposite to their sentiments might be the contents of the book in question, this *auto da fé* of its pages might have been spared; and he recollected the decent superstition of the Turks, who collect and preserve with the greatest care every scrap of paper on which the name of God has been accidentally written. At last De Courcy tried to ingratiate himself with the party, by attempting to speak on the only subject discussed among them; and, in answer to some observation

* Fact; me ipso teste.

of Macowen's, he tasked his memory to cite some passages from Fletcher's eloquent "Appeal." Macowen at once silenced him, by telling him, with a chilling look, that Fletcher was an Arminian; and as little as he understood of the phrase, it was enough to signify that he was *hors de combat* in the present engagement. He made one more faint attempt to rally by quoting a passage, which he imagined to possess resplendent beauty and truth, from "Coelebs in search of a Wife." It was that fine speech of Lucilla's father, where he speaks of the internal evidence a believer has of his own conversion; and concludes with the utmost felicity of allusion, "One thing the Christian knows, that whereas he was blind he now seeth."

De Courcy spoke with eloquent animation; but the dubious shake of the head, the sigh of stifled reprehension, the "damning of faint praise," made him feel that heterodoxy was not confined to Arminianism

alone in the opinion of the party; and that Hannah More herself, in spite of her ample strides to the evangelical side of the question, was still regarded by rigid Calvinists as "little better than she should be." All he had now to do, was to cover his retreat by "joining the ladies;" and never was retreat effected with less glory and more satisfaction. But when he arrived in the drawing-room, the same monotonous and repulsive stillness; the same dry circle (in whose verge no spirit could be raised) reduced him to the same petrifying medium with all around. The females were collected round the tea-table; the conversation was carried on in pensive whispers; a large table near them was spread with evangelical tracts, &c. The room was hung with dark-brown paper; and the four unsnuffed candles burning dimly (the light of two of them almost absorbed in the dark bays that covered the table on which they stood,) gave just the light that Young might have

written by, when the Duke of Grafton sent him a human skull, with a taper in it, as an appropriate candelabrum for his tragedy writing-desk. The ladies sometimes took up these tracts, shook a head of deep conviction over their contents, laid them down, and the same stillness recurred. The very hissing of the tea-urn, and the crackling of the coals, was a relief to De Courcy's ears.

The fact was, his presence was a constraint on them; for religious people never feel themselves quite at ease, except in the presence of those whose opinions are similar to their own, or so opposite as to justify a challenge to open a controversy. De Courcy felt this, and also felt that the constraint he imposed was doubled on himself; still he lingered, for he had a hope to support him—the hope that brought him there; and, though not yet realized, it seemed to grow stronger every moment its indulgence was suspended. He might yet

obtain one glance from Eva, one conscious look, any thing that intimated they had met before, met even in terror and distress; for any thing allied to strong emotion, seems to us allied to love, and we can hardly see those who have participated with us in strong emergencies, without feeling a tie of the heart to them. A stranger, with whom we have suffered shipwreck, appears ever after to us as a friend. For a look he had come, and for a look he still waited. When he appeared before dinner, she had recognized him only by a slight bow, and afterwards appeared engaged among the females of the party; and now, though nearer to her than before, her down-cast eyes were fixed on some netting, and though silent, she appeared deeply attentive to the few words that were uttered near her. It was only at a moment when all eyes happened to be withdrawn from her, (except De Courcy's,) that she raised hers, and their smile, for hers were eyes that could smile,

made him feel more than all the eloquence that gratitude or passion ever poured forth. Oh! how a smile can repay love, even for the sacrifice of life; how hearts can understand each other, when the eyes alone are the interpreters between them; and language, in all its infinite variety, affords nothing so expressive as a look! Yet, in the look of Eva, there was nothing for presumption, or even for hope to dream of; in her beautiful eyes nothing could be read but the timid thanks of a helpless terrified girl for protection from danger,—thanks which she had not the courage to convey in words, and which she felt it almost a crime to express by a look. For months after he fed on that look; it came to him like a beam of light, and he forgot whether it was day or night when it glanced before his eyes.

The whispers of the party were now faintly rising into articulate murmurs, and De Courcy caught some singular sentences. Mrs Wentworth asked a droopingc onsump-

tive girl next to De Courcy, how far she had got in the Pilgrim's Progress.

"I have got no further than the *Slough of Despond*, ma'am," said the poor girl, with a phthysicky querulousness of accent almost ludicrous.

On his other hand sat a lady, whose life was divided between the kitchen and the conventicle; and a singular tinge, from her divided pursuits, pervaded her conversation. She was giving a history of her converting her cook, but made perpetual digressions to a fillet of veal that had been overdone the day before. "And, Mary, after my reading to you, says I, three sermons of Romaine's this very day, and leaving Burder's Village Sermons on your dresser, I did not expect, Mary, you would have spoiled that veal—you should think of your duty, Mary, at your spit, and not have spoiled that veal,—but indeed," in a lowered, confidential voice, "the jack is not so good as it ought to be."

In a few moments the rest of the party came up, and then Charles witnessed a new scene. The evenings of religious people are necessarily monotonous; they do not dance, they do not play cards, and music (except sacred music) is rarely admitted. When tea was over, and it was a long operation, (for men who drink little wine are much attached to the milder excitement of the tea-table) a table was placed in the centre of the room, with a Bible and a Hymn-Book; a layman of distinguished gifts was requested to "give a word of exhortation," and some clerical members of the party were urgent in the request. He complied, and opening the Bible, selected a verse from the Epistle to the Romans, and addressed the audience in an *extempore* discourse. The language was excellent, and the matter equally so, to those who relish Calvinistic divinity. At the conclusion, another of the party gave a long *extempore* prayer, in which he petitioned the Deity

that the eyes of *one*, who was yet in darkness, might be enlightened to behold the glory of the truth; and Charles, who felt that he was the only one to whom the petition was applicable, blushed, even on his knees, at the application.

The service concluded with a hymn, in which most of the company joined, some with science, but all with devotion. The harmony was good, for there were many voices; yet Charles could hear but one.—Her angel figure, as it bent over the harp, —her white slender arms,—her clustering locks, thrown back by a motion of the head, so graceful, yet so infantine,—and her upcast eyes, as their pale-blue lustre broke from beneath the shade of her ringlets, might have made a poet or a painter think of a young Cecilia in her first moments of inspiration, but could make a lover only think of herself.

The party separated early; and Charles, though surprised, was pleased to find that

no allusion was made to the adventure of the preceding evening, nor did it even appear to be known to the rest of the party. He could not bear the thought of standing like a mark for congratulation to be discharged at by strangers; but even the fear of it was spared him. In fact, Mr and Mrs Wentworth wished the subject to be never known, or soon forgot; the latter from strong and just reasons, and the former because he had the sense, in all important matters, to be governed by his wife.

CHAPTER IV.

Τι τοῦ ὁ δὴ λογοιν ανθρωπὸς ἐρᾶν
Ηδιστον, ω τεκνον, αλγιστον δ' αμα.

EURIPIDES.

FROM that day Charles became an admitted member of the family; he was invited almost every day, for the Wentworths appeared to feel their obligations in proportion as they concealed the expression of them. Every day in that family was exactly like another; a succession of evangelical guests, or evangelical topics, filled up every hour. Sometimes the strong and cultivated mind of Mrs Wentworth threw a gleam of light across the narrow horizon to which she had bounded herself, but it was soon darkened. Yet this cheerless monotonous existence, this life of phrases, (for he had not acquired the feelings of the

party,) was to Charles the most exquisite delight. He saw her every day, every day he heard her voice, though not addressed to him;—a single movement of her figure, unconscious as she was of its graces, plunged him in a delicious reverie for hours;—a single word, addressed to him accidentally, left him without power to reply to it, and then he retired to repeat it to himself like a spell, till his senses became giddy with delight.

When we first feel passion, the presence of the object beloved is all we seek on earth; we imagine that if we are but admitted to its sight, every wish of the heart is fulfilled; and, like the Persians before their God, we only ask to see, and kneel, and worship. But in a short time the sight of that object whom we love, beheld under circumstances of constant constraint,—the sight of an object whom we can see as we wish, but cannot speak to as we feel, the struggle of the "bursting heart and reined tongue" become insupportable. Every day he saw her

he drank deeper and deeper the intoxicating draught which he had not the courage to keep from his lips, though he felt it maddened him. But the constraints under which he saw her became every day more insupportable;—to see her, and to see her constantly among strangers, to whom her sole attention was devoted;—to see her, yet to feel that her eyes were never turned towards him; to hear her, and to watch for a monosyllable addressed to himself, on which he might feed for a day;—to contrive a thousand devices that her dress might touch him as she passed,—that he might, in turning over the leaves of her music as she sat at the harp, touch her fingers, or feel her odorous breath pass near his cheek;—to waste the day in expedients to be near her, and feel that to be near her was to be every day nearer madness;—yet to suffer all this in the presence of strangers,—beings among whom he felt as if they did not understand his language,—as

if they formed no part of his creation,—as if they could see him die, and never ask the cause, or understand it if it was told; —to do this long was impossible.

The presence of a beloved object, surrounded by strangers, is worse than absence to those who love; for it forbids those illusions of the imagination which absence indulges. Solitude becomes a relief, compared to the necessity of suppressed emotion, increasing in proportion to the increasing force of that emotion; that presence then becomes a torment we cannot bear; we wish to be as far as possible from constraint, from witnesses, even from the object we love; we wish to be able to exclaim aloud, to vent inarticulate cries, and to seek in the silence of nature that relief which society seems sworn to deny us. In these fatal indulgences of passion, stealing glances and sounds to feed its feverish appetite in solitude,—of days wasted in watching for a look, and nights in recalling them;

in this existence of dreams, four months were passed away, and with them Charles's health and spirits, and vital resources, were passing away swiftly also. All on a sudden he discontinued his visits at Wentworth's, for he felt he could no longer support the sight of that face whose every glance seemed to be drinking up his blood.

Her coldness appeared increasing too, though, in fact, her manners had not undergone the least alteration; but in proportion as his own feelings became more fervid, her's must, by contrast, have necessarily appeared colder. In climates where the ardour and brilliancy of the sun are beyond the conception of a European imagination, the *coup de soleil* is often fatal; so it was faring with Charles,—he sickened under the brightness of the object by whose light he lived. Perhaps a little more knowledge of the female character would have enabled him to draw a conclusion more favourable to the wishes he did not dare to utter; but

the penetration of Charles, wholly unaided by vanity, could never discover that timid silence is the most expressive language in which a young female can intimate the absence of indifference. When he had torn himself from Wentworth's, he gave up all society; not even Montgomery was admitted: He gave up all study, all literary pursuits; but read still those few works in which passion is represented in a state of wild intoxication, or hopeless despondency. All day he spent in his rooms, and in the evening his wasting figure was sometimes seen in the College Park, shunning and shunned; for even those who did not know the cause of his dejection, were repelled by its effects, and the gay De Courcy was deserted by all.

It was now spring, but the weather was cold and ungenial, and the trees were bare; nothing could be more suitable to the gloomy complexion of the season and the scene, than that figure, once eminent above

all human forms for grace and elegance, now withered and bending like the dry branches under which he glided, or against which he leant, while the damp clay on which he stood was no paler than his cheek, and the stormy sky above was not darker or more agitated than his mind. These late unwholesome walks, followed by nights of total restlessness,—nights in which, after traversing his room for hours, he threw himself on his bed, still dressed, not to sleep, but to dream, wore away rapidly both his frame and his constitution. "His beauty was gone for very heaviness,"—spirits and rest were lost, and the willing victim was rapidly sinking into the grave.

One fatal indulgence, which he still pursued, was only calculated to feed the distemper which it seemed to relieve:—He often went out at a late hour, alone and unsuspected, to wander near the house, and guess at her form as it glided past the windows, and listen to the sound of her harp

and her voice, when the evangelical party, usually assembled there, joined in hymns. That voice, in his present exhausted state, would have been more than he could bear, had he been in her presence; but its notes, "by distance made more sweet," combined all the luxury of melancholy with the intoxication of passion. He listened, and imagined that such sounds might perhaps be uttered over his grave, and he would have resigned his spirit that moment to have had its parting soothed by such a requiem. He did not know that the voice which filled him with such delicious anguish was observed, by those who heard it, to grow every day fainter, and that the cheek of Eva was growing paler every day, while those who watched it never guessed what worm was preying on its rose; nor, had he known it, would he have divined the cause more than they. The impression that he had received of her was that of a being so devoted to God, that man

could have no share in her thoughts or her heart; he regarded her as something enshrined and sanctified, to whom the mention of earthly things would have been an insult, and of earthly passion, almost impiety.

Even to himself, his love almost appeared a crime, and it seemed to cost him less to die of its concealment, than to disclose it. The change in his health now grew alarming. Montgomery, whose feeling but proud mind could not stoop to solicit for confidence, grew every day more wretched about him; and, at length, accidentally learning his guardian's direction, wrote to him, guardedly but explicitly—stating the desperate situation of Charles, as well as his obstinacy in refusing all medical advice, or friendly communication on the subject.

Mr Asgill, on the receipt of this letter, came instantly to town. He first waited on Montgomery, to whom he expressed his thanks in a voice choked by his emotions,

and then made some enquiries about the state of Charles, which perhaps he had ascribed to other causes. But Montgomery had told all he knew, and could now only express his hope that Mr Asgill had not come too late. Mr Asgill then went to Charles—he was alone as usual, and when he saw this respectable man, for whom he had always felt veneration, and still as much affection as his heart had yet to spare, he rushed forward to meet him, with a mixture of cordiality and secret shame, that burned on his cheek, and trembled in every limb. Mr Asgill was prepared from Montgomery's letter for this interview; but he was not prepared for the object he encountered. It was not in the damp emaciated fingers he wrung in his; nor in the hollow cheek, where one feverish spot burnt deeply; nor in the sunk eyes, whose wandering fires burnt fiercely one moment, and the next seemed extinguished in their sockets; nor in that wasted frame, where the slight

ness of youth seemed rapidly yielding to the attenuation of death, that he could discover a trace of the beautiful, graceful, healthful form, that he had parted with a few months before in all the pride of youth and strength. The old man's voice was lost; his hand remained helpless in Charles's; he tottered from strong emotion.

"Won't you sit down, sir?" said Charles; and his voice, retaining all its former sweetness, restored Mr Asgill's recollection.

"I will—I will," said he; accepting the offer not from courtesy, but necessity—and he sunk into a chair, covering his face with his hands. The next moment he looked up; the glow of meeting had faded from Charles's face, it was the hue of clay—and the old man could only repeat—"I thought—I hoped——and this is the state in which I find you?—Oh! Charles—if"——

The crimson spot burned stronger than ever on the cheek of the sufferer, as he replied,—"And can you, sir, for a moment,"

——His own voice was suppressed by shame and grief, as he added faintly—" I may be wretched, but I never was vicious."

" And what, *what* then can be the cause of the state in which I find you ?" A dead silence followed the question. Mr Asgill repeated the question.

" I am not ill," said Charles, faintly ; " I am not indeed," he repeated more earnestly as he observed that his assertion was only answered by a melancholy shake of the head. He extended his hand with strong emotion to his old friend, as a kind of assurance ; Mr Asgill took it, he held it in his for a moment, looked at the skeleton fingers with agony ; the tears burst from his aged eyes. Charles sunk into his chair again ; the old man, wiping away his tears, hastily retired, without adding a word.

The next day he returned, accompanied by a gentleman, and Charles could not refuse to see his former tutor's friend, though all human society was a burthen to him.

The stranger was a man of extensive information and agreeable manners; and it was only by his at length leading the conversation to medical subjects, that Charles discovered he was a physician. He had been brought for the purpose, and Charles did not oppose it; he answered his questions, and the doctor and Mr Asgill soon retired. Montgomery happened to be in the room, and he heard Charles after they were gone, murmuring to himself, "Canst thou minister to a mind diseased?"

The next day, various prescriptions appeared; and Charles, too gentle to oppose, and too indifferent to reject, or willing to pacify Mr Asgill by a compliance that he thought would be his last; or, perhaps, indulging a secret hope that those medicines might expedite an effect contrary to their intended purpose, submitted to take them —but his disease was beyond their reach— he grew every day visibly worse; and Dr H——, whose candour was equal to his

skill, told Mr Asgill that he feared the patient's distemper was in his mind; then Asgill's influence, and Montgomery's entreaties, were exerted in vain to discover the cause. Determined on preserving his desperate secret, Charles's constancy was proof to all importunity, but his health suffered by the struggle. He was now confined to his bed—the proud Montgomery had humbled himself even to kneel before him, but Charles, believing that no human influence could avail for him, cherished his secret with that melancholy pride which seeks from disappointment what it has been denied by hope, and declined all solicitation with a quietness that leaves repetition no hope and no excuse.

His fever increased; Montgomery now remained with him day and night, and availed himself of the helpless situation of Charles to pay him those attentions which he feared would have been rejected if he had had the power. One night, after ra-

ring much, Charles fell into a feverish doze; Montgomery alone was in the room, for Mr Asgill, yielding to his infirmities, had quitted him after midnight. His sleep was broken by startings and mutterings. Montgomery drew nearer to the bed—"Her heart is fixed on God alone," he murmured; "she disdains man—she disdains man—she disdains me." He then talked incoherently about Mr Asgill having come to town to marry him, but only arriving in time to inter him. He laughed frightfully—then he grew calmer, and spoke of his own burial—"Lay me somewhere that her foot may tread on me—perhaps she may shrink—no,—she has already trod on my heart, what matters its dust?" He then seemed to be speaking to some friends who were trying to intercede for him—"No, no, don't speak to her—she is a soul so pure—one burning sigh of mine would blast her—when she appears before God, to be the object of earthly passion would be a spot on her robe of glory—

let me die—but do not tell her of it. Yes—yes—(appearing to address Mr Asgill)—I would pray, but my prayers are sins—and her's are pure incense—do not pollute them with my dying groan." Montgomery listened in that vague terror (at first) with which we hear the raving dreams of a feverish man—but when he heard her name pronounced with a sigh that convulsed the frame of the sufferer, he could enjoy the "bliss of ignorance" no longer—Montgomery loved her himself.

In a few moments Charles awoke—he started up,—"Montgomery, are you there?—Oh! yes, you never leave me—Montgomery, have I been raving?—my head is"—Montgomery bid him compose himself—"But did I mention any name?—the name that——"

Montgomery, who, to the living or the dying, never spoke but the truth, pressed him to take some composing medicine that had been ordered for him, that he might

evade the answer; Charles took it, and sunk back in a state of stupefaction. Montgomery trembled while he held it to his lips, and then retired; the air of the room, which he had never felt oppressive before, had become intolerable in a moment. Charles's windows had been left open by the orders of the physician; he hurried to one of them, and leaned far out of it, gasping for breath. He felt in a moment the cause of Charles's sufferings, and in bitter, but generous anguish, felt that the sacrifice he was about to make might be attended with similar sufferings to himself. In a moment, he saw, as he imagined, the issue of the whole affair. Montgomery could reason coolly, though he could feel warmly, and he said to himself, "I have no chance, or if I had"——The thoughts of Charles's ample fortune, the resistless attractions of his person, the sincerity of his attachment, (almost fatally testified) rushed on his mind like overbearing witnesses against him.

Montgomery had the rare faculty of feeling in cases where he was a party as if he were only a judge, and he determined the case instantly; he did not quit Charles till daylight; he had resolved to wait on Mr Asgill directly, and disclose the truth; but as he quitted the room, and stole one glance at the sufferer, a selfish thought (a rare inmate) visited him for one moment. "He is dying," said he to himself; "yes—he is perhaps dying," he added, "and I may save his life." In the morning he went to Mr Asgill.

CHAPTER V.

Mr Asgill received him with eager enquiries about Charles; for the morning revives alike the hopes of the sick, and of those who watch them, though they have no other hope. Montgomery immediately spoke to the point; he told Mr Asgill that he had (involuntarily) learned from Charles's ravings in a dream, the real cause of his sufferings,—that he was dying of a complaint that few suspected, and still fewer suffered from. Mr Asgill listened to him at first with surprise, for the old cannot easily believe that life depends on feelings they have long ceased to feel; but in a few moments his solicitude for Charles overcame the incredulity of age, and though he would have

heard with ridicule the tale of a young man dying for love,—when that young man was Charles, every thing vanished before the wish to save him—" he believed all things, endured all things"—and eagerly pressed Montgomery for the name of the lady, and for the means of introduction to the family.

It was then Montgomery's heart was wrung; he saw from Mr Asgill's eagerness that nothing would be left undone to facilitate the match, and he hesitated so long before he could answer his enquiries, that had Mr Asgill had eyes, ears, or perception for any object but one, the truth could hardly have escaped him.

" Her name is Wentworth," said Montgomery, speaking with some difficulty; and he added, that she resided with her uncle.

" And is she so beautiful?" said Mr Asgill,—" is she so excellent?—is she indeed worthy of Charles?"

To dwell on her image at the moment

he was resigning her, was too much even for Montgomery; after a vain effort to speak, he pressed his hand to his damp forehead, and, complaining of fatigue, attempted to retire.

"You must be very much fatigued," said Mr Asgill; "and I was too selfish, too fond of Charles I mean, to press you to speak; but you will have a harder task to fulfil to announce to him his happiness—(for I have scarce a doubt of it)—yet I would not undertake it, it would be too much for me; you must be the messenger, and, considering his precarious state, it will be a difficult task."

"It will be a difficult task to me," said Montgomery; and collecting all his resolution, he went away to watch by the bed of Charles. Mr Asgill hastened to Wentworth's, and it was not till he was at the door that the strangeness of his commission struck him, and the chance of failure came over him like a sudden chill. He was

going, a stranger, to solicit strangers, of whose manners, habits, feelings, and interests he was totally ignorant, in behalf of one who might be as indifferent to them as he was dear to him. They might have disposed of her otherwise, or she might be averse to him, or a thousand circumstances might arise that would render the interview ineffectual, and even ridiculous. All this passed through his mind, but along with it came the image of Charles as he saw him last, pale, wasted, and raving; and the hand which he had raised to the door was suspended no longer. If we have ardour in youth, in age we have tenacity, and Mr Asgill felt a confidence, from interest being on his side, which never enters into the calculations of the young. He announced his name, and in a few moments Mrs Wentworth waited on him.

"I am a stranger, madam," said Mr Asgill; "but the occasion on which I wait on you will not admit of forms." Mrs Went-

worth bowed, and sate in an attitude of attention. "I have a friend,—a young friend, most dear to me, who has the honour, I understand, to be your acquaintance. He is, I fear, dying; but his recovery,—his life,—may depend on you,—on your family."

Mrs Wentworth appeared much shocked, and more so when he added the name of De Courcy. She spoke warmly of his merits, and of the sense which all her family entertained of them; and when Asgill again mentioned his dangerous state, she rose from her seat with emotion, and eagerly asked, What it was possible she could do to serve or to save him? Mr Asgill acquainted her with his attachment to her niece; and with scarce less zeal than if he had been pleading for himself, implored her influence as the only means of preserving his existence. Mrs Wentworth's countenance changed, and she resumed her seat.

"You must be sensible, sir," said she, "that it is impossible to give a direct an-

swer to such an application, even under the urgent circumstances which you state;—the extreme youth of the parties,—Mr Wentworth's absence at this moment,—my utter ignorance of the state of my niece's affections,—my confidence, indeed, that her affections have never yet been excited,—and a circumstance stronger than all, a circumstance that I trust will weigh with you, as it must with her uncle and me,—the marked difference of religious sentiment, the unalterable basis of conjugal unhappiness,—all these, sir, must at once preclude the possibility of my giving the answer you could wish, or that I," she added, yielding to the natural warmth of her feelings, "feeling as I do at this moment, could wish myself."

Mr Asgill took a good omen from her last words, and entering into an explanation of his religious sentiments, which were as Calvinistic as her own, endeavoured to persuade her that Charles only required an

union with such a family to adopt its sentiments; and he urged a topic from their mutual opinions, of the danger to which not only his life, but his spiritual state might be exposed, from an ill-timed obstinacy in rejecting a convert, whom Providence, as well as grace, appeared to have placed within their very reach. Mrs Wentworth saw the fallacy of this reasoning, though, in compassion to the feelings of the speaker, which she saw had more share in what he said than either his reason or his theology, she but slightly exposed it.

"If you, sir," said she, mildly, "entertain those views of the gospel, which I am willing, from your language, to believe you do, you must be conscious that the power by which any one 'believes unto salvation,' is a power from above, and that the most promising natural means are ineffectual, unless directed by Him who causes 'all things to work together for good to them that love him, and are called according to his purpose.'

Believing this, as I trust you do, you surely cannot imagine that any human influence, however powerful, would be finally effectual in such a case. Nay, sir, may I not ask,—and forgive the question,—Is not so strong an attachment, as you represent your friend to be affected by towards an earthly object, almost a proof that God can have little share in the heart, when the imagination and the senses are so pre-occupied by a creature? Is not the altar, devoted to such a sacrifice, the very last (humanly speaking) which we could hope to be lit with the fire of the sanctuary, and blown with the breath of the seraphim?"

"Madam," said Asgill, "it is for us to use the means, not decide on the end."

Mrs Wentworth allowed this, and promised to mention the subject of their conversation in the most favourable manner to Mr Wentworth and her niece; and she even added, that of all the *unenlightened* young men she had seen, Charles appeared

to her the least likely to endanger the temporal happiness of his earthly partner. Mr Asgill, who felt that no more could be gained without risking all, was going away, when he paused for a moment to speak of Charles's ample fortune, and of the splendour in which his future wife might be maintained. He did not speak from his heart, for he despised wealth with all the uprightness of a conscientiously religious man, but he would not omit any topic that he thought might prove a plea in the cause of his client. As he looked up in Mrs Wentworth's face, he saw this plea availed nothing in the Court of Conscience. She calmly observed, that her niece was independent, and were she not, she trusted she could answer for her, that worlds would not bribe her to the alienation of her heart, or the prostitution of her conscience.

Mr Asgill then took his leave, and though nothing could be less hopeful than this interview, yet he persuaded himself, as soon as

he was out of the house, that Mrs Wentworth's expressions were much more favourable than they seemed to be; and before he saw Charles again, he resolved to represent his visit as almost successful. Mr Wentworth came home shortly after, and his wife mentioned the subject of Mr Asgill's visit in terms the most qualifying she could think of, (for she felt an interest for Charles which her religious sentiments contended with, but could not overcome,) and she now felt herself reduced to act almost the same part with her husband that Asgill had lately acted with her. Wentworth instantly armed himself in "complete mail" of scriptural phraseology; and he quoted sundry texts from the Epistle to the Corinthians, to prove that "to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers," was so diametrically opposite to the precepts of the gospel, that even to propose it was scarce less criminal than being guilty of the fact itself. His wife was prepared for this, and she was also prepared

with the arguments usually urged against it, which he had often heard; for the subject is much discussed among evangelical people, when the object of their inclinations, as sometimes happens, is not a convert to their creeds.

Mr Wentworth stood his ground impenetrable. Then she condescended even to call in the secular arm, and (incidentally) mentioned Charles's splendid prospects, and the temporal advantages that would accrue from the union; but before she could finish the sentence, her conscience checked her, and she suddenly stopped. But this argument, though urged with no strength, (for Mrs Wentworth was truly conscientious,) had more effect than she wished to be aware of on the hearer. Mr Wentworth instantly became silent; his worldly feelings recurred; but a moment after (like a man who mistakes the reverse of wrong for right) he assumed the look and tone of authority which weak

minds substitute for argument, and insisted upon hearing the subject mentioned no more. Mrs Wentworth had too much knowledge of her husband's character to oppose him on the spot; she led him from it, but then dexterously led him back again, by representing (almost in the language of Mr Asgill) the strong human probability there was of Charles adopting the sentiments of the family of which he became a member; and she tried to interest Mr Wentworth's religious views by the hope of a convert, and even to flatter his vanity by the prospect of his controversial powers being distinguished by facilitating that conversion.

In all this there was nothing of female art, and but little of earthly feeling; Mrs Wentworth (whose heart was naturally warm) was strongly, though almost unconsciously, attached to Charles; all her human feelings were on his side of the question; and though she had maintained be-

fore Asgill the inviolate state of her niece's affections, her penetration had scarcely wanted the aid of his disclosure to discover that if Charles was really attached to Eva, any opposition he might meet with would not be aggravated at least by her insensibility. All her human feelings were engaged in the question; and it was so long since she had felt them, that their exercise now appeared an indulgence. Mr Wentworth, in answer, repeated his injunctions that the subject should never be mentioned again, while in the same breath he expressed his wish that the young man should visit at the house as formerly. His real motive for this concession was, his foreseeing a subject of endless controversy in the conversion of Charles, (and controversy he delighted in,) but this motive he took care to conceal from his wife, and they parted mutually satisfied; she with having gained his permission that Charles should

be admitted as a convertend, and he with the prospect of exercising his talents, and displaying his importance.

Mrs Wentworth then went to Eva, and Asgill himself never felt more agitation as he stood in doubt at her door a few hours past, than she felt when about to speak of a lover to her whose heart she had hitherto tried to fill with God alone. She paused at the door for many minutes, and then resolved to defer the disclosure till evening. Evening came, and Eva and she were alone; and she felt as all do who trust to delay for diminishing the difficulty of a task,—that it only increases it. At length she forced herself to speak; and such was her emotion, that she continued to speak, her eyes intently fixed on her work, and her shaking hands making no progress in it, without regarding the effect of her disclosure on her niece, till at its conclusion Eva threw herself at her feet in an agony of tears. Mrs Wentworth was shocked and

alarmed; she forgot her feelings for Charles in her feelings for one far dearer; she feared that she had been pleading for one who was indifferent to her; and, in the tenderest language of confidence and conciliation, she implored her to believe that no influence would be exercised over her affections, and that she had with reluctance undertaken the office of pleading for one whom she now would never mention more. Eva wept still, and still did not venture to raise her head.

"Why do you weep?" said Mrs Wentworth; "you shall be disturbed no more on this subject—let us forget it for ever." Eva raised her head for a moment, but her thick locks had fallen over her eyes, and though their expression seemed to struggle through their shade, in the next moment her locked hands tried to conceal it. "I see," said her aunt, hastening to end the scene—"I see he is indifferent to you—his name shall be heard no more."

As she rose to go, Eva, still on her knees, detained her — Mrs Wentworth paused. "These tears," said Eva, scarce audibly, "are not shed for indifference."

CHAPTER V.

In religion I duly observe every form;
With a heart to my country devoted and warm,
I give to the poor, and I lend to the rich.
Fakeer. But how many nails do you stick in your ——?

It was in November when Charles and Eva first met, under circumstances so repulsive; and it was in the beginning of spring that Charles was received as the acknowledged friend of the family, and the permitted lover of Eva. Guardians and friends (for neither of them had parents) had given consent to their union. The extreme youth of both parties had made them defer the period of that union for three years; but, during that interval, they had youth, love, health, affluence, and beauty—

every flower that can brighten the desert of life glowed in their path, nor was there a single weed to darken their beauty, or to dull their fragrance.

To common eyes, Charles and Eva might have seemed to live like the first pair in Paradise,—the same beauty of form, the same sanctity of life, the same unison of heart. "They took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends." Was there any thing to disturb hearts that seemed above the vicissitudes of life, both from passion and fortune, that were linked by a tie "not of this world?"

They had much yet to encounter; for every day Mr Wentworth's eagerness to make Charles a convert increased with its difficulty, and every day Mrs Wentworth's fears increased, that the spiritual interest of both was sacrificed to the impulse under which she had espoused Charles's cause, (and still remained his advocate, rather from habit and feeling, than from conscience;) and

Asgill, as the temporal interest of his pupil recurred to him, felt that, in his terror for Charles's life, he had perhaps compromised all that could render life valuable, by consenting to his union with a family who regarded him as little better than an infidel, and where the very object of his attachment seemed to tremble between the alternate claims of nature and grace, while she felt that the chosen of her heart was not the partaker of her faith, was not "the Elect of God." Even Charles himself, whose devotedness of heart made him regard the whole world as a shrine, where there was but one Deity, and but one worshipper, whose recovered health and reason seemed to be given him only to exhaust in gazing on her for whom they were nearly lost, even he felt the persecution to which he was exposed from the principles and habits of the family, and its intimates, at times almost beyond the patience of a lover. Every morning, though a constant

visitor, he felt like a stranger to himself and those around him; the house was filled with religious persons of various denominations; all met for the purpose of controversy or devotion, or both; and, after the protracted and luxurious breakfast, the signal for battle was generally given by some spiritual leader. Predestination or Perseverance sounded their tocsin in the ear of some jealous and startled Arminian, the conflict commenced, and they would talk,—"Good gods, how they would talk!" —till their minds, inflamed with the fiercest passion, and their tongues on fire with the most terrible anathemas, and scarce hiding their abhorrence of persons under a denunciation of principles almost dooming each other to eternal torment, while they affected to supplicate the Divine Mercy on the professors of imputed error, on another signal given, they would sink on their knees together, but still continue the warfare under the shelter of an address to the Deity,

by appealing to him for the defence of his own truth, and imploring him, with that kind of charitable malignity peculiar to religious people, to turn their erring brethren from darkness to light, to give them the "heart of flesh for the heart of stone," &c. &c. &c. Such was the morning, and such was the evening too; and the evening and the morning that made the first day, made every other also.

Eva, though she never joined in controversy, listened to it with profound habitual attention, and joined in the prayers with earnest devotion. Charles was sometimes amazed, and sometimes provoked, by the attentive patience with which she hung on lips that seemed to him to utter incomprehensible jargon, or daring profanation, while his own eager vigilance of looks was scarcely rewarded by a glance, for which Eva seemed to reproach herself, as if it was stolen from heaven; yet, like the patriarch, he felt (when that glance was directed to

him,) that the time "he served for her was but as a moment." The constant warfare carried on in his hearing, would have been more supportable if he were not almost constantly the object of it himself, for, from the moment of his becoming an intimate in the family, the whole evangelical party had set themselves for life and death to convert him.

Though these people decry worldly power and influence in their operation to facilitate the diffusion of the gospel, and repeat often, that "not many wise, not many mighty," &c. &c., yet still they grasp at the aid and authority that worldly influence can give; and when they have obtained it, they triumphantly quote from Isaiah, "That kings shall be their nursing fathers, and queens their nursing mothers," &c. &c. Charles's large fortune, his talents, his avowed devotion to an evangelical female, and the suavity of his manners, which they mistook for docile ignorance, promised a fair

subject for conversion, or at least for controversy. Charles at first yielded from timidity, or answered from complaisance, but at length found himself, by the pertinacity of the disputants, inextricably involved in the mazes of controversy. Every hour he was called on to discuss or to decide on points above human comprehension; he was pressed with importunities about his spiritual state, which was represented to depend on his adopting the separate creed of every individual speaker, with all its divisions and subdivisions, and shades of difference, that seemed to him to give to airy nothing "a local habitation and a name." And he was warned, in language that disgusted him more by its grossness, than it terrified him by its violence, not to dare to unite himself on earth with one, with whom he never could be united in eternity, unless he seduced her into that path of perdition in which he was advancing himself, without hope of retreat or return. From this per-

secution he was sometimes freed by the influence of Mrs Wentworth, whose influence never failed, even amid the rage of controversy, and sometimes by the fears of Wentworth, that he might lose his convert by the violence of the means employed to secure him; but in these moments of respite, when he turned to Eva for relief, he found not the relief he expected.

Her feelings were as deeply, though not as vehemently, engaged in the cause as those of the controversialists; and the silence which her youth, her sex, and her timidity imposed on her, and the deeper interest she felt in the conversion of Charles, made her listen with that anxious attention to the debate, which Charles contantly mistook for indifference to him; and even when released from this, the purity of Eva's manners, the primitiveness of her mind, and her equal inexperience of life and of passion, forbid those furtive but exquisite indulgences, by which love can alone subsist in

the midst of constraint, disturbance, and opposition. They had never loved like lovers; for months he had now been the inmate of the family, yet never had he dared to avow his feelings, nor ever had Eva ventured, by glance or word, to tempt or reward the avowal; if he raised his eyes to hers, they were withdrawn; if he touched her hand, the shrinking of her diffidence seemed like the shudder of reluctance to him; nor could he see the look with which she dared only to follow his parting steps; nor could he hear the sigh which she never breathed, till the ear for which it was meant could hear it no longer. Sometimes, very rarely, they were accidentally left alone; and those moments Charles felt the most painful of all. The subject that trembled on the lips of both, was the last those lips could be brought to utter; the timidity of a young and delicate female may give confidence to men accustomed to the female world, but it communicates itself to

a youth scarce older than herself, and who knows in the female world but one object; and they had no common subject to unite them, or to lead to another.

The only subject on which Eva could speak, was that exhausted already by every other speaker; she had read no books, but those of Calvinistic theology, and though her remarks on the occasional passages of brilliant eloquence in those, or of poetical enthusiasm in the hymns, shewed gleams of mind that he would have caught and pursued like the pillar of fire in his wilderness, yet in a moment that light was again extinguished, and the cloud resumed its place. She could speak but of the books she had read; those were few, and the habits of her life reared an impenetrable barrier against her acquaintance with others. To her, one book, her Bible, seemed to contain the substance of all others; all other prose was futile, all other poetry falsehood. Sometimes, to escape from what is actually the

most exquisite torture to those who love, (the presence of the object, when we feel or fear we have no power of interesting it) he solicited her to sing for him; she complied, (for she too felt his presence a burthen insupportable from feelings that appeared to her almost guilty, and wholly inexpressible) —but she knew nothing but hymns; and the solemnity of her manner, only animated by a warmth that was borrowed from the *subject*, not from the *hearer*, chilled into reverential silence every feeling those lovely lips, (and the sound that thrilled through them, like the breeze opening the cup of a rose-bud,) would have excited.

How could he ask from lips that had but just uttered the name of their God, and expressed an exclusive devotion to his glory, an avowal of love to a creature? how could he expect that eyes exalted to heaven in the rapture of devotion, would turn to glance on a being, whose trembling adora-

tion must at that moment have appeared almost impiety? If he spoke, would he be listened to?—If he knelt, would it not be termed profanation?—There was but one pursuit in which their tastes united, and in which Eva seemed to feel it not a crime to solicit sometimes his aid, and sometimes even his approbation.

She drew exquisitely, and her talents had been highly cultivated; for Mr Wentworth knew that this was the only talent that could not be paraded in society, and no expence had been spared to render her execution equal to her taste. But even this pursuit received a strong tinge from the peculiarity of her habits and manners. Undraped figures, or figures in wet (or no) drapery, and the anatomy of the human figure, and those subjects which some young ladies delight to study, under the pretence of proficiency in the art, Eva would not have looked at. Her landscapes were

beautiful, and she delighted in drawing flowers.

Charles had one evening procured some beautiful exotics, and he hastened to Dominick-street with them. Mrs Wentworth and Eva were at the house of a friend about a mile from Dublin, where he had the privilege of following them. The drawing-room was empty when he arrived; but in a green-house off the stair-case Eva was seated drawing; he spread the flowers before her, and their hues and their fragrance seemed pale and faint to the glow of delighted surprise that tinged her beautiful cheek, and the odorous breath that for a moment mingled with his as they bent over the flowers together. She selected some Provence roses from them, and began to copy them in a wreath she was painting. As she leant over them, a long lock of her lovely hair fell over the paper—Charles removed it unrepelled; his trembling fingers lingered for a moment on her white neck; Eva felt it

but did not dare to shew she felt it. Charles bent over the drawing; she felt his burning breath on her cheek, till the heat seemed communicated to it; she heard his shortened respiration, and the tremor of his hand, as it touched her chair, made her own faulter. She knew not why she was disturbed, yet dreaded to know more. She rose, and saying something indistinctly of the warmth of the evening, walked to an open glass-door near her. Charles followed silently; it was a lovely evening; the glow of a brilliant horizon, and the rich expanded scenery of the Bay of Dublin, burst on their view as they stood together.

The heart of Eva seemed softening, and the humid radiance of her eyes had all the softness and all the azure of the heaven to which they were raised. Charles ventured to touch the hand that lay half concealed among the roses that clustered round the window; it was not withdrawn; he ventured to press it,—it trembled, but remained

in his; almost doubtful of his happiness, he raised his eyes, swimming in delicious dews, to hers; they were cast down, but not averted. Intoxicated with delight, he ventured to touch her fingers with his burning lips; Eva withdrew them, and the look of tender reproach, that seemed to complain of a broken, though tacit confidence, made him feel a danger that till that moment had never entered the imagination of either.

* * * * *

"What a lovely evening," said Charles, his faultering respiration scarce making the sentence audible.

"It is most lovely," said Eva; "and oh! what a richness it gives to this lovely scenery to think, 'my Father made all this!'"

"And may not a thought of the creature be mingled without impiety amid the feel

ings such a scene inspires?" said Charles. "May not one human sigh be heaved, and be forgiven? Oh! Eva," he uttered wildly, "be less lovely, less pure, less cherub-innocent, or bid me not think of heaven while I can behold you!"

Eva shrunk from him, no less alarmed by his wildness, than revolted by his language; and though she could not speak, the calm rebuke of her look, "severe in youthful beauty," dispelled the delirium of the intoxicated boy, and drove him in a moment to the wildest extreme of penitent humiliation.

"Oh! pardon me—but you will not pardon me, Eva—I have offended your feelings—I have offended your God. In vain I solicit you for pardon, which you cannot grant, because you cannot feel—you cannot love—love, as I do, with a heart broken, a brain distracted, an existence trembling on the verge of the grave before I dared to speak. Such love is profanation

in your ears—yet such I have felt to the risk of my very life—such I feel—such I avow at this moment at a greater risk—your displeasure. Eva, pity me, if you can, for you can never love as I do."

As he spoke, his burning tears fell fast upon the hand he held, but which, though it trembled, no longer struggled in his grasp. The sublimity of religious feeling made Eva at that moment feel a strength far above the frantic energy that supported Charles; her youthful timidity, her habitual reserve, her maiden sanctity of feeling, all yielded to the spirit that upbore her, as, still holding his damp and trembling hand, she pointed to heaven, and exclaimed, "*I* cannot love!—look there, and see how I can love—as one who hopes to meet the beloved of her soul *there*."

She bent towards him as she spoke, and the first pledge of love was received by Charles with a feeling far different from

that with which it was communicated; by him with the maddening enthusiasm of earthly passion; by her with the feeling of a seal to an eternal union.

CHAPTER VII.

——" Susan was piously given,
And the worst of it was, we could never agree
'Bout the road that was shortest to heaven."

MOORE.

CHARLES, at the commencement of the conversation, felt as if he had irreversibly offended, yet, at its conclusion, he felt relieved from a burthen insupportable. It is certain that an explanation is necessary between those who have a sentiment of any description for each other, and that should it develope even very opposite feelings between them, it is a relief to have avowed them. Convinced that Eva felt for him all she could feel for mortal, the ardour of his own feelings suggested to him the hope

that he might communicate it to hers, and inspire her with that passion which he felt himself, but which, wanting in enthusiasm in her, seemed to him to be wanting in return. A sigh, a look, a touch, that thrills to the heart, is enough in the infancy of love; but the passion soon becomes importunate, and the heart that feels defrauded of its expected return, could exclaim with Lear—"I gave you all!"

After this interview he ventured to oppose Eva's opinions and habits, and to infuse some portion of his own feelings into hers. They never could agree about the term "passion." With Charles it was something which, though he could speak of with inspiration, he could never define, and though he could feel to madness, he could never express; with Eva it was the hope of life being brightened by a partner who would aid her steps, and fix her eye in her progress to eternity. Both of them were perhaps disappointed in the object

they had selected for their respective feelings, but both were only inspired with greater solicitude for their mutual conversion. Like all disputants, too, each of them lost ground by maintaining their own side of the argument; and, like most disputants, each of them was glad to retreat to any auxiliary subject as a resource. Charles, passionately fond of music, and to whom all music was comprised in her voice, often implored her for a *mortal* song; and he was amazed how any one who decried human poetry as the idle sport of an intoxicated imagination, could apply, without hesitation, the warmest language of human passion, (which so often occurs in the evangelical hymns,) to the expression of human passion, and address the Deity in such lines as these:—

"How tedious and tasteless the hours,
When Jesus no longer I see;
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers,
No longer have charms for me."

And he had heard her speak with pleasure of "Watts' poetry," with which she was too well acquainted not to know that such is the style in which he describes the death of Moses:—

> "Gently his fainting head he laid
> Upon his Maker's breast;
> His Maker kist his soul away," &c.

And such are the lines in which he mingles his aspirations after divine love, with a kind of amorous pastoral feeling almost unintelligible, and wholly unsuitable—

> "I'll carve thy name on every bark,
> And every wounded tree
> Shall drop and bear some mystic mark
> That Jesus died for me."

Such was the poetry to which ears and lips were accustomed that closed with horror against the efforts of imagination, or the aspirations of passion, or even the voice of music, unless combined with the language

of an evangelical hymn. He urged this inconsistency on Eva, and ventured to ask her, by what unction of impunity the lips of evangelical females were armed, that enabled them to apply such expressions to objects wholly unsuitable, while they would shudder to address them to those to whom nature and passion seemed to appropriate them? Eva could only answer him in the language of habit, and of habit the language has no power, except to those who are under its influence; yet the purity of her sentiments was a silent pleader for her, and though Charles was wearied with the monotony to which her exquisite voice was confined, he would have shrunk with horror from hearing her sing one of the airs that modern females are accustomed to sing.

They differed on almost every other subject, but to Charles even this opposition had a charm; for what would have been mere obstinacy in any other female, had in

her the attraction of a virtue. It was not for opinion, but for principle, she contended, and she made this so plain, yet with such modesty, she bore her faculties in controversy so meekly, that Charles experienced more than the pleasure of victory in defeat; yet he felt that this perpetual conflict of opinions and habits was no happy prelude to domestic union.

One evening he brought her some flowers to copy, and shewed her at the same time a beautiful sketch of the ruins of Athens, which he had himself taken that day from a volume in the College Library. Eva looked at the architecture slightly, though she well understood its principles, and felt the beauty of its modulation, but immediately began to copy the flowers. Charles looked on with surprise and disappointment; Eva observed it, and after a long silence, (for, unused to speak, and fearful to offend, her simplest observations were preceded by silence,) at last she said,—"*These*

are the work of God, *this* is the work of man. There is but one image that I would wish to be ever present to my thoughts, and even the humblest of His works revives it."

"And is there but *one* image, Eva," said Charles, mournfully, yet daring, though unconsciously, to be jealous of the Deity, "that you would wish to be present to your thoughts?"

"I need not *wish*," said Eva, scarce articulately, and bending over the flowers, "for the other;" and then feeling she had said too much, she hurried to add,—"These pillars remind me of nothing but man's efforts to immortalize a temporal existence; to tell the living, in the voice of vanity, that man has been;—but these flowers will be renewed as long as existence can continue, and are scattered on the grave as a memorial of a life sometimes beautiful, but always transitory, as them."

"And does nature, then," said Charles,

"only speak to remind us of the infelicity and short duration of life? Why should we not then turn to those brilliant monuments that dignify existence, and give immortality on this side of the tomb? Flowers may fade, but the memory of genius survives many flowers, even the laurel that is strewed on its grave."

"I love these flowers," said Eva, answering her own thoughts, not those of Charles; "God made the country, but man made the town."

* * * * *

Charles thought he had got very far when he had led Eva to quote poetry, and "on that hint he spake." It was in vain. Beyond Cowper, the evangelical poet, she knew nothing, and would know nothing; and such was the tranquil purity of her

mind, such was "the sober certainty of waking bliss," with which she seemed to fill the narrow sphere of her enjoyment, that Charles felt it almost a crime to try to familiarise her with works of imagination and passion, to communicate to her "the sweet madness" with which she had inspired him. At times he felt it was like the attempt of Milton's Satan to introduce into the pure region of heaven "strange fire, his own invented torment." Still he urged her to read poetry, for he felt as if it might plead for him,—as if its impassioned language could convey to her what he could not utter.

One evening he had succeeded in prevailing on her to listen to "The Lay of the Last Minstrel;" she was struck by the introduction, and Charles was proceeding with that increasing confidence which the increasing interest of a listener gives a reader, when the clock struck, and she reminded him it was time to go to the evening lec-

ture at Bethesda Chapel. Charles, with a sigh, threw aside the poem, and accompanied her. The sermon was eloquent and long, the congregation profoundly attentive; Charles sate abstracted and listless. As they returned, the lovely calmness of a vernal night revived the feelings of Charles; and as Eva leaned on his arm, and sometimes raised her looks (but with other feelings than his) to the bright blue spangled sky, that exquisite passage broke involuntarily from his lips, that ends with, "for lovers love the western star."

Eva started, started with actual terror; she felt the name or language of love like a profanation of the moment, and told him that she was trying to recollect the substance of the sermon she had just heard, and impress it on her memory. Charles was silent; and silently accompanied her home, where nothing but the sermon was spoken of, and every division and subdivision of theological subtlety was run on

it to exhaust the hour that must intervene till the bell was rung for the servants to attend the family devotions, and a long extempore prayer from Mr Wentworth concluded the night.

The following evening, Charles had succeeded, almost beyond his hopes, in engaging both Mrs Wentworth and Eva in Burns' "Cotter's Saturday Night," when an evangelical female friend hurried in with the intelligence of a distinguished preacher of the gospel, who was "to give the word of exhortation" in the meeting-house at York-street that evening. Pelisses and bonnets were instantly in requisition, and Charles, spell-bound, followed. The discourse was every thing that could be expected from a man well versed in Calvinistic theology, expert from habit in extempore speaking, confident of his audience, and still more confident of himself. Eva listened with deep and unaffected attention; and her eye, fixed on the preacher during a dis-

course of an hour and forty minutes, could not spare one glance to him whose eye was fixed only on her, till, at the conclusion, she turned to him with a look that spoke triumph in the eloquence of the preacher. His eyes, fixed on her with a far different expression, struck and almost terrified her. Those burning glances she had encountered before, and felt distressed and perplexed when they were turned on her; but here their expression was so different from that of the feelings with which she was trying to fill her heart, and hoping to communicate to his, that it was in vain she attempted to shrink from a painful consciousness of their meaning. The place appeared to become a silent interpreter between her and him; she felt it as forbidding her not only to meet those looks, but even to scrutinize the state of her feelings. Every object around her murmured to the mind's ear, "Let God be all in all." She knelt to join in the silent prayer in which

the congregation were united at the close of the sermon, but those looks followed her still. Her heart was at war with itself, and some tears struggled through her fingers as she pressed them on her closed eyes, but felt she could not shut his image out.

"I think too much of him," she said to herself, and she shuddered at finding those words had mingled themselves among her prayers. Memory, with a busy, backward glance, led her to Bethesda Chapel, where his sight had first caused her to wander in her prayers. She compared the present agitation of her heart with the tideless calm she had felt before she knew him; and to those who have experienced a calm that is the result of religion, any disturbance of it appears like a crime. The novelty of the agency makes them suspect the agent. "I love him too much," she murmured to herself. And when they were retiring, she felt some reluctance at the arrangement made by Mrs Wentworth, who took her

friend's arm, and consigned Eva to the care of De Courcy. Their intelligence was now becoming so intuitive, that De Courcy felt he had offended her, though he knew not how; he recollected, however, that she was in the habit, on quitting a place of devotion, to endeavour to impress on her memory the substance of the sermon she had been listening to. He paused, till he could pause no longer.

"Why are you so silent, Eva?"

"I was thinking of that fine text."

"What was it?"

"What was it?" said Eva, almost relinquishing his arm, from a feeling stronger and more unpleasant than surprise, for she had no idea of any one forgetting the text so soon.

"I have a bad memory—or a bad headache," said De Courcy, trying to smile away her amazement—"or, perhaps, I would rather hear it from your lips than those of that dark-browed sallow man."

"It is little matter," said Eva, "from what lips we hear the truth. The text was, 'God is Love.'"

"Oh, Eva!" said De Courcy, under an impulse he could not resist, "do we require any thing more than this dark-blue sky, this balmy air, those lovely stars that glitter like islands of light in an immeasurable ocean, and point out our destination amid its bright and boundless infinity, to tell us that 'God is Love?' Why must we learn it in the close and heated air of a conventicle, with all its repulsive accompaniments of gloomy looks, sombre habits, dim lights, nasal hymns? Are these the interpreters the Deity employs as the intimations of his love?"

"They are," said Eva, awakened to an answer, but never thus awakened for more than a moment—"they are. For to the poor the gospel is preached, and they seldom feel any thing of the atmosphere but its inclemency,—to the sick, and they can-

not encounter it,—to the unhappy, and they cannot enjoy it."

De Courcy was silent; for what can be replied to truth? But at the moment he felt, as the guests at the ancient Egyptian banquets may be supposed to have felt, when the death's head was served up at the table to remind them of mortality, just when they wished to forget it—he felt, if the truth must be told, that he wished her less religious at that moment. They arrived in Dominick Street; Mrs Wentworth stood for some time at the door talking to her friend, Eva and De Courcy were at a little distance. The hand that hung on his arm had gradually sunk. Eva was unconscious of this motion, which was merely an intimation that they were parting. De Courcy was not, for the hand came gradually in contact with his. He touched it as a signal of reconciliation; and small as his was, even to feminine delicacy, hers was soon contained even in his. Eva disen-

gaged and attempted to raise it, to point to a brilliant star on which she believed De Courcy's eyes were fastened as much as her own. De Courcy's eyes were fixed indeed, not on the star, but on her hand, and as she raised it, his lips were fastened on it too. She struggled to withdraw it; the difference between their feelings seemed to be striking her every moment more and more. As she extricated it, she looked on him with as much reproach as her eyes had the power of expressing; but that was very little. His flushed cheek, and ardent eyes, met her glance; their beauty had something terrific to her. She knew not what he felt, but she knew he did not feel like her.

Mrs Wentworth descended the steps to press him to join their family supper. The head-ache, of which he had complained on quitting the meeting-house, was becoming intolerably painful, he pressed his hand on

his burning forehead, and declined her invitation.

"Wanderer," said Mrs Wentworth, "and where did you earn that head-ache?"

"At a billiard-table, last night after I left you," said De Courcy; repentance, sincerity, and something like anger, producing the confession. Mrs Wentworth hastily retreated up the steps.

"What is a billiard-table?" said Eva, following her.

"It is something better than a conventicle," said De Courcy, as he turned from the door.

CHAPTER VIII.

> Wretch that thou art; an elder cried, and gone
> For everlasting. Go thyself, said John;—
> Depart this instant, let me hear no more.
>
> CRABBE.

THE Wentworths had long known that De Courcy was not one of them, or, in their own language, that he was "of the world;" but they tried to conceal what they knew both from each other and from themselves, if possible, though from very different motives; Wentworth, because not even his attachment to Calvinism exceeded his due appreciation of De Courcy's L.3,000 a-year, and Mrs Wentworth from compassion for Eva, and from a hope, which was, however, growing fainter every day, of his finally adopting the religious sentiments of the fa-

mily. It is certain, from the facility of De Courcy's temper, and his enthusiastic passion for Eva, he would have become a ready and docile catechumen; but the rigour of Wentworth's family-discipline, and the repulsiveness of the instrument on whose operations they chiefly relied for his conversion, were the principal means of obstructing it. This instrument was Macowen, whom De Courcy, who had discovered his worldliness, sensuality, pride, and virulence of temper, hated with an hatred passing that of swadlers. The increasing difference between his habits and those of the family was growing thus more obvious every day, and he was even at less pains to conceal it; he opposed Mr Wentworth's dogmatising, and even ventured to question some of his opinions, to which he had formerly listened with respectful silence.

When Wentworth was announcing with triumph the happy evening he was to spend in company with a Socinian, a Catholic, an

Arian, and an Arminian Methodist, who were assembled for the purpose of being exposed for the whole night to the battery of a dozen resolute Calvinists, De Courcy could not help asking, If he looked forward with pleasure to such an evening? while his own look and tone announced that he would have awaited it in horror.

"Unquestionably," said Mr Wentworth —"Oh it will be a precious time—a time of refreshing for the soul.—The enemies of the Lord shall then be found liars!"

"And is it possible, sir, you can find pleasure in such a clash of creeds, tenets, and tempers?—Why, the Synod of Dordrecht itself will be a Quakers' meeting to such a Babel."

"*Without controversy*," said Mr Wentworth, "*great is the mystery of godliness*."*

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* This glaring misconstruction of a well-known text I *have met in print* in the work of an American controversialist. I have introduced it as a hint to those who

And, satisfied with this apposite and conclusive quotation, he was retiring, when an exclamation from De Courcy struck on his quick ear, as an invitation to prolong the dispute, and he turned instantly.

De Courcy's exclamation was extorted by a different cause; he had taken up a newspaper that lay on the table, and read aloud, with vivid and heedless delight, the announcement of the arrival of the celebrated Madame Dalmatiani, first singer at all the continental operas, and first tragic actress in Europe, who, by the unprecedented liberality of the manager, (relying on a generous public,) had been engaged on enormous terms to perform a few nights at the Dublin theatre, the last she was ever to appear on. Little did the generous public,

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are ignorant of the original language, to be careful how they lay their hands on the text. The writer above alluded to quotes it as a testimony in favour of the necessity of controversy.

or the manager either, know of Madame Dalmatiani's motive for visiting Ireland. De Courcy had heard of this extraordinary woman from men who had been abroad; according to their various descriptions, she was a Siddons, a Catalani, a Gabrielli, a La Tiranna, with all the terrible Medea-graces of Cumberland's description. She was all the muses, and all the graces embodied, in the beautiful slender form of a female about 20; but the talent that excited most wonder was her perfect knowledge of the English language and literature, and her marked preference of the characters of English tragedy, which she played alternately with those of the Italian opera. De Courcy poured out all he knew or heard of her as a kind of comment on the paragraph which he had read; and in his new-kindled enthusiasm forgot every thing but her of whom he was speaking.

Mr Wentworth had kept silence even from good words, though it was pain and

grief to him; but when he heard De Courcy, by way of climax, announce his intention of visiting the theatre every evening during her stay, the smothered flame burst forth with the fury of a volcano. He had been provoked by De Courcy's strictures on the controversial party, and this was a fine opportunity for venting it;—on he went triumphantly, and every histrio-mastrix, from Tertullian down to Prynne and Collier, might have been raised from the dead with joy. He cursed stages, stage-plays, stage-players, frequenters and abettors, from Thespis down to Mr Harris and the committee of Drury-Lane, lamp-lighters, scene-shifters, and candle-snuffers inclusive, not forgetting a by-blow at De Courcy for visiting those *tents of Kedar*.

"What is a theatre?" said he; "a place where the name of the Deity is never heard but in execration or blasphemy; where, contrary to the commandment of the Lord, (see Deuteronomy, chap. xxii. ver. 5.) the

women wear mens' garments, and the men the womens'; and where Satan gains so many souls for five pieces of silver a-night, that I suppose he now repents of his prodigality in giving thirty for that of Judas."

De Courcy bowed before the storm while it raged, and replied, by a simple repetition of his intention to visit the theatre every night Madame Dalmatiani performed; he then retired. Mr Wentworth knew not where to vent his highly-raised wrath, so he turned on Eva.

"And this is the chosen partner of your life!—these be thy gods, oh Israel!—A clog upon the wheels of your soul, to drag them back into perdition. I should not be surprised if one day he had the confidence to propose your visiting that temple of Satan along with himself; but first I would see you visit your grave."

"And are all plays, then, so wicked?" said Eva.

"I know nothing at all about them,"

said Mr Wentworth. "I thank Heaven I never read one of them, and trust in *his* grace I never shall."

CHAPTER IX.

Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi
Exercet Diana choros———
———Deas supereminet omnes.

VIRGIL.

ALL the next day, Eva said to herself, "He will not go to the theatre;" but it was observed that every moment that day she was taking up the newspapers, and examining the column in which the play for that night was announced, and Madame Dalmatiani's name, in broad and attractive capitals, blazed in the van. She read and sighed, then laid it down, and read it again. Charles did not go to Dominick-Street all that day.

Sir Richard Longwood was nominated one of Charles's guardians, but he was mere-

ly a nominal guardian. He had asked his ward once or twice to dinner since his arrival, and the invitation had been complied with, just as it was given, in form. But the very night before, Sir Richard had said to Lady Longwood, as the servants were putting out the candles after a supper party, "Why was not De Courcy here to-night?"

"I don't know," said Lady Longwood; "I believe he had a card—he never comes here now,—you know he is going to marry a methodist?"

"A methodist! Lady Longwood; a young man of his property married to a methodist! Lady Longwood, I tell you, you do not look into these things—it would be no bad look-out for Honoria or Caroline."

On that hint Lady Longwood did not speak; but she wrote a polite note, with the best crow-quill in her writing-desk, which was left next day at Charles's rooms,

requesting the pleasure of his company to a family dinner, and offering him a seat in her box to see the celebrated Dalmatiani, who had been particularly recommended to her during her residence in Dublin.

Charles, who had determined to go, accepted the invitation. A singular circumstance occurred that day; as Charles was going to Merrion-Square, where the Longwoods lived, he met a Mr Cole, a neighbour of his guardian, Mr Asgill's. They shook hands—"Well, my young friend," said Mr Cole, "I hear you are going to be married—and that you are to commence bridegroom before you commence bachelor, academically speaking."

Charles blushed and hesitated.

"Pray, may I ask the goddess's name, if a goddess can be supposed to have a Christian name?" said Cole.

"Her name is Eva Wentworth," said Charles.

"Any relation of Wentworth's of Abbey-Street, who was in business with my uncle till he turned evangelical?"

"A niece," said Charles.

"Niece!" repeated Cole; "niece!—Impossible. Wentworth had only a sister, who died unmarried, and Mrs Wentworth never had brother or sister—You must be mistaken, Charles?"

Charles could only repeat that she was said to be Mr Wentworth's niece; but when, after Cole's repeated assurances that it was not possible she could stand in that relation to him, he felt it impossible to refute it, they parted with an impression of uneasiness on Charles's mind that he could not account for, and would not examine.

The bustle at Merrion-Square soon left him little leisure to think further; a large party was assembled at dinner, and no tongue could utter any sound but Dalma-

tiani's name. Those who knew nothing at all about music, spoke of nothing but her compass, science, and volubility; and those who knew just as little of literature, were still louder about an Italian actress being able to understand Shakspeare, though there was not a character in Shakspeare she had undertaken to act; and Honoria and Caroline, judiciously placed on each side of Charles, bored him with questions about Italian music and the English drama, and finally (instructed by their governess) asked him which he liked best, Metastasio or Shakspeare? Charles tried to evade the question by pointing out the difference between a writer of musical dramas, and the creator of the English stage.

"Oh!" said Miss Longwood, "but does not Ophelia sing in Shakspeare; and did not Shakspeare set the songs for her?"

"Oh yes," said Miss Caroline, proud of superior literature; "but then Ophelia was mad, you know, and Shakspeare, or *any*

gentleman, would do as much for any girl "crazed in care, or crossed in hopeless love." These words were scarcely uttered, when the coffee was brought in, and the carriages announced, and the whole party set off for the theatre, mad with the rage of patronizing, and giving their vanity all the credit of liberality and taste.

The performance on this night was a succession of scenes from the most distinguished Italian operas. The house was crowded, and the overture just over as they entered. A brilliant audience, lights, music, and the murmur of delighted expectation, prepared Charles for a far different object from Eva. What a contrast in the very introduction, between the dark habits, pale lights, solemn music, and awful language of a conventicle, and the gaiety and splendour of a theatre! He felt already disposed to look with delight on one who was so brightly harbingered, though it was amid a scene so different his first impressions of passion had

been received and felt. The curtain rose, and a few moments after Madame Dalmatiani entered: She rushed so rapidly on the stage, and burst with such an overwhelming cataract of sound on the ear, in a bravura that seemed composed apparently not to task, but to defy the human voice, that all eyes were dazzled, and all ears stunned; and several minutes elapsed before a thunder of applause testified the astonishment from which the audience appeared scarcely then to respire. She was in the character of a princess, alternately reproaching and supplicating a tyrant for the fate of her lover; and such was her perfect self-possession, or rather the force with which she entered into the character, that she no more noticed the applauses that thundered round her, than if she had been the individual she represented; and such was the illusion of her figure, her costume, her voice, and her attitudes, that in a few moments the inspiration with which she was agitated was

communicated to every spectator. The sublime and sculpture-like perfection of her form,—the classical, yet unstudied undulation of her attitudes, almost conveying the idea of a sybil or a prophetess under the force of ancient inspiration,—the resplendent and almost overpowering lustre of her beauty, her sun-like eyes, her snowy arms, her drapery blazing with diamonds, yet falling round her figure in folds as light as if the zephyrs had flung it there, and delighted to sport among its wavings; her imperial loveliness, at once attractive and commanding, and her voice developing all that nature could give, or art could teach, maddening the ignorant with the discovery of a new sense, and daring the scientific beyond the bounds of expectation or of experience, mocking their amazement, and leaving the ear breathless—All these burst at once on Charles, whose heart, and senses, and mind, reeled in intoxication, and felt pleasure annihilated by its own excess.

The performance went on; applauses were doubled and redoubled at every re-appearance of the enchantress. Charles gazed on without speech or plaudits, like one "blasted with excess of light." The house seemed coming down at the end of every song. Charles heard nothing but the song. He looked round, and wondered that the applause was louder than his own silent sigh. Excess of any feeling deprives us of all power of expressing it. To a *spectator*, Charles must have appeared the only indifferent person there; of all there, an *observer* would have seen he was the least so.

It was for the last scene she had reserved her powers,—those astonishing powers that could blend the most exquisite tones of melody with the fiercest agitations of passion, that could delight the ear, while they shook the soul. She came forward, after having stabbed the tyrant to avenge the fate of her lover. Her dress was deranged,—her long black hair floated on her shoul-

den,—the flowers and diamonds that bound it were flung back, and her bare arms, her dark fixed eyes, the unconscious look with which she grasped the dagger, and the unfelt motion with which from time to time she raised her hand to wipe off the trace of blood from her pale forehead, made the spectators almost tremble for the next victim of one who seemed armed with the beauty, the passions, and the terrors of an avenging goddess. Applauses that shook the house had marked every scene but the last. When the curtain dropt, a dead silence pervaded the whole theatre, and a deep sigh proclaimed relief from oppression no longer supportable.

The Miss Longwoods were the first to recover the use of speech for Charles's torment, and they eagerly began to express their fears of her intention to commit real murder, and to congratulate each other on their safety in being so far from the stage. "They would not for the world

have been in the stage-box—Would he?"—Two or three ladies fainting in the stage-boxes luckily gave their curiosity and their alarm another direction, and they were in eager debate in one moment whether one of the fainting ladies was in a pink or a white satin spenser, and wishing for "God save the King," that they might have an opportunity of standing up and displaying their long French shawls in drapery, when the box-door was opened, and a gentleman of Lady Longwood's acquaintance entered, and announced that Madame Dalmatiani wished to pay her respects to Lady Longwood before she retired to a party where she was engaged to sup.

"Oh, delighted," said Lady Longwood. "I shall be delighted to see Madame Dalmatiani!—Pray tell her I shall esteem it a particular favour.—Honoria, Caroline, make room.—Mr De Courcy, she can sit between you and me.—Honoria, you can speak Italian to her; at all events speak French, not

a word of English, or she will think you a *bete*. Take the copies of the opera out of your ridicules, and be reading as she comes in; it will shew you understand it."

All this exhortation was lost on the Miss Longwoods. With staring eyes, and no small degree of terror in their faces, they continued gazing at the open door, through which they every moment expected to see Madame Dalmatiani enter, dagger, or, perchance, sword in hand, in all the terrors of her dying scene.

"Do you think she will come in with the real dagger in her hand? Do you think she will have that blood on her forehead? Was it real blood, or only paint?"

"Oh, no, it was only paint; they could not afford real blood every night, and mamma says she is to act every night this week."

Charles stood with his eyes fixed on the door. Madame Dalmatiani entered, handed in by a musical nobleman, well known in Dublin; and all her omnipotence of ta-

lent never could have produced such an effect on the minds of Lady Longwood and her daughters, as her being escorted by an earl. She advanced, and paid her respects to Lady Longwood in English; her language was at once elegant and polite, and not the slightest trace of a foreign accent perceptible, though her manner and attitude had all the foreign onction. Lady Longwood in vain tried to collect her habitual politeness to meet a woman whose claims in society appeared as high as her own, united with such extraordinary talents. She wished to parade as a patroness, and found herself no more than an equal; and as for the Miss Longwoods, not only Italian and French, but all English failed them;—they bowed and sat in timid awkwardness, consoling themselves by registering every item of her costume in their heart's-core, yea, in their heart of hearts. Madame Dalmatiani was instantly recognized by the house, and applauses loud and

long greeted her on the moment of her appearance in Lady Longwood's box. She rose, and, with the most attractive humility, bowed to every side; her bending attitude—her hands pressed on her heart, seemed to bespeak her a suppliant for the forbearance of applause that oppressed her; but the eye that flashed beneath the white downcast lid, and the long dark lashes that fringed it, spoke a suppressed consciousness of powers that could justify and enjoy the applauses of assembled worlds. It was when she sat down and turned herself to address Lady Longwood, that Charles could first behold her with undazzled eye; she still wore her splendid dramatic costume, but to avoid notoriety, she had wrapt herself in a large French shawl, whose folds, if possible, augmented the grace of that figure no drapery could conceal. She had fastened up her long hair, and taken off the diamonds she wore on the stage, but the flowers were still twined through her dark

ringlets. Her bare arms were studiously kept within the thick folds of her shawl, and the simplicity and privacy of her figure made a delightful contrast to the terrible energy of attitude and passion that it had developed a moment before. She exerted herself to speak to Lady Longwood, though evidently fatigued with her late efforts; and the sweetness, the gentleness, and even the timidity of her manner, were so powerfully contrasted with the tremendous and soul-searching powers she had lately displayed, that awe and admiration were rapidly exchanged for far different feelings. Her age appeared hardly twenty; her beauty, though marked with the strong features of the continent, united all the charms of innocence with all the magic of intellect. As she turned to bow to some vapid praise of Lady Longwood's, Madame Dalmatiani's carriage was announced by a long train of servants at the door, and Lord —— rose to offer her his hand; she drew

her shawl round her, and bowed low to Lady Longwood. As she gave her hand to Lord ——, she perceived she had dropt her diamond bracelet; Charles at the same moment took it up, and offered it. With the freedom of continental women, but consecrated by the simplicity of her manner, she bowed her silent thanks, and held out her white and beautiful arm while he fastened it on, though all the time she continued speaking to Lord ——. Charles fastened it with a trembling hand; from that moment, Lady Longwood and her daughters talked incessantly, almost frantic with the vanity of having had Madame Dalmatiani in their box; they took care to make their triumph known by such extravagance of praise, so loudly uttered, that the attention of the whole house was fixed on their box, as they wished it to be.

How happy Lady Longwood would have been, had she heard the jealous hints of matrons and daughters less fortunate

than herself, on the glaring notoriety of her introducing an actress into her box just after her public performance, and known how those remarks were aggravated by the rich and handsome De Courcy being displayed by her daughters' side, as if to increase their triumph! But Lady Longwood wanted nothing but her own positive feelings to set her almost mad with gratified vanity—the first performer in Europe visiting her box—the finest youth in Dublin seated between her daughters;—how she talked, and how she triumphed!—fortunately for Charles, her volubility excluded the necessity of an answer, and prevented her observing that she had not the slightest share of his attention. Of all that she said he only retained the last words—"You won't forget us to-morrow evening—Madame Dalmatiani has promised us her delightful society—We intend quite to domesticate her with us during her engage-

ment—A few literary friends—Just what she likes—She hates large parties—So do Honoria and Caroline—indeed, quite domestic—Caroline, why don't you take Mr De Courcy's arm?—But were not you delighted?—Oh, what an actress!"—

"Oh, what a woman!" sighed Charles.

All this time they were in the crowded lobby, and Lady Longwood purposely "won her way" slowly through the throng, loud and louder in her anticipated delights of the next evening, Honoria and Caroline echoing every word.—"Lady Longwood's carriage stops the way."—What welcome sounds to Charles! With an eagerness, alike mistaken by the party and the spectators, he escorted them to the carriage; the servant held down the step—"We have a place for you," said Lady Longwood, bending forward, in the softest tones of insinuation. "You'll sup in Merrion-Square?"—Charles did not hear her; he scarce knew

where he was; the impatient footman dashed his flambeau against the wheels of the carriage, and called to the coachman to drive on; Charles bowed his silent negative, and the carriage drove away.

CHAPTER X.

Musa refert, dedimus summam certaminis *uni*.

OVID.

THE day passed Charles scarce knew how; he had hardly a conscious moment till he found himself at Lady Longwood's. A mixt sensation of danger and delight was over him, but he attended only to the latter.

Quite contrary to Lady Longwood's promise, her rooms were crowded; her vanity was too great to suffer Madame Dalmatiani's presence at her parties to be unknown; and when she had circulated it as a secret that she was to pass her even-

ing *en famille* in Merrion-Square, she made it the greatest of all possible compliments to admit her "dear five hundred friends" to see her, each on the individual assurance, that they were *favourites* so distinguished, flattering herself that she had secured popularity and fashion for her daughters, by the *eclât* of her first assembly.

Lady Longwood had been accustomed only to the usual routine of parties—youth in folly in one room, and old age at cards in another; but this night she tried to diffuse a more continental air over her party; —not a card-table to be seen, groupes in *attitudes* of conversation at least, chess-tables, volumes of engravings, hired for the night, and harps and pianos, occasionally *touched* by professors, to bring on their timid pupils, who sat down, and then, like Lady Heron, "could not, would not, durst not play." Every thing was arranged according to Lady Longwood's ideas of a foreign conversazione; there was only want-

ed mind and talent to give the meagre skeleton "life, and breath, and all things."

When Charles entered, Lady Longwood was gliding round the room, proud of a secret, and ten times more proud that that secret related to Madame Dalmatiani; and by this time the circle required some excitement; card-playing matrons were yawning, and exclaiming to each other, "How charming, oh how superior to the usual routine of Dublin parties!" Then whispering to every one near them, "Oh, what a bore! not a card-table—Will *that woman* sing to-night?—I'm so sorry I ordered the carriage away;" and the misses, three deep, leaning on their intended partners, and straining their white necks, "But will there be no dancing?—And it is all to depend on Madame Dalmatiani?—Sure one could hear her at the theatre—I was there last night, but I would not for the world miss seeing her at a private party—Oh, it is so delightful to see a public performer at a private party—Don't

you think she will look quite different? or will she come dressed as she was last night?"

All this time Lady Longwood was busily circulating her important whisper,—"How fortunate—think how fortunate I am in acquiring such an intimate!—a woman of rank and fortune in Italy—immensely rich, quite independent—the sale of her jewels alone would enable her to live in opulence any where—to have a *house in Merrion-Square*, if she pleased—just remains on the stage from habit, and is come to Ireland in quest of a lover of hers, or something of that kind—quite a romantic incident—how interesting—quite the air of a foreign princess!"——

"How interesting—quite—quite the air of a foreign princess,"—and all the fair auditors stretched their necks to the utmost extent of elongation, and those whom ill fate or a late arrival placed in the back ground, sprung with unbidden and unwelcome feet on the velvet sophas to catch a

glimpse of Madame Dolmatiani, or display their aerial figures in all the graces of tiptoe expectation.

But who of all the groupe were blessed like the Miss Longwoods that night! They followed in the wake of mamma, not so loud as her, for they took care to breathe their little nothings *sotto voce*, but they too had their secrets to tell, and their intelligence to whisper.

"Oh, yes, she is immensely rich, and she has diamond ornaments, presents from all the princes of Europe; and she has sung for Buonaparte and the Pope; and she is dressed just like us, only the arms quite bare, and the shoulders; and I am determined to have all my dresses made without shoulder-straps; and she has real Parisian lace round her neck, and real French flowers in her hair. I'll never wear an English flower again as long as I live; and she has spoken two Italian sentences, and one in Latin, since she came in. I knew the Ita-

lian, because it sounded just like the Italian in Veneroni's Grammar, and the other I am sure was Latin, because I did not understand it, but all the gentlemen looked as if they did. And what is most delightful of all, she will only be called by her Christian name; it is quite the custom in Italy, and she says she does not know herself by any other name but Zaira. Oh, I wish I had been born in Italy; I wish I had been called Zaira," said both fair speakers, in unison duet, forgetting that if both had been called Zaira, one of them must have adopted another, for distinction-sake at least.

"But won't she sing, won't she do something in a foreign way?" said or looked the fair listeners, who were too far to be heard but by gestures; "and won't we see the lace, and the French flowers, and how she does her hair?"

"Oh, no," said the Miss Longwoods, well taught to disguise their own rage for

exhibition under pretended politeness, "that would be committing her as a public performer. Caroline and I will first sing our Italian duets, and then we are to have waltzing, and then a figure-dance by the Miss Dennets and us, that they composed for us; and then, perhaps, Madame —— Zaira will accompany one of us on the harp. I have got a charming harp-song, and I'll try it just to bring her on, you know."

At this arrangement all the hearers were as externally delighted, and internally disappointed, as polite hearers are and seem to be; but there was no time for farther speeches, the folding-doors of the music-room were thrown open, and the superb harp and piano, placed just beneath their ample arch, to increase their sound, were discovered amid a blaze of lights. Zaira, who was seated at the other end of the room amid a small circle of literary men and well-informed women, all unconscious

of the *eclat* of her French flowers and classical shoulders, was enjoying the rarest of all feasts, the feast of reason, and wondering at her rarer good fortune in being permitted to enjoy it undisturbed, when the sound of music, of the Miss Longwoods singing, broke on their ears. Zaira bowed in silent answer to a gentleman who had just spoken to her, and made a motion that signified she wished to listen to the music.

There was obviously a mixt effort of good nature and politeness in this, that almost reconciled them to the loss of her conversation; they could no longer listen with admiration, but they beheld her with delight. At every passage tolerably sung she turned her brilliant eyes on the circle with an expression of pleasure so generous and unaffected, that she almost communicated the pleasure she tried to feel, and made the spectators sympathise in the candour of her own heart. Dancing followed, and Zaira, after a few remarks on the foreign dances,

wood, with affected humility, and real presumption.

Zaira complied, though she could hardly suppress a smile; but the timid, trembling Honoria, when consulted, stoutly declared she could only sing the first; there was no retreating, and the first singer in Europe had the honour to accompany Miss Longwood as a second in a duet. Charles saw and felt all this; and the simplicity and goodness of heart that Zaira developed in this short scene, made a stronger impression on him than the dazzling talents that she had displayed till that moment. No exertion of powers, no grace of accompaniment was wanting to the performance. Zaira did all; instead of contrasting and exposing the presumption and inferiority of *her first*, sustained her with all her powers, those matchless and exquisite powers that made all other singers forgot where she sung; and, at the conclusion, bowed with that flattering humility that confers the

distinction it seems pretending to decline. But after this effort, she declined every importunity to sing, and retreated to the circle from which she had been called; and the Miss Longwoods sung and waltzed amid cold bravos and languid gazes for the remainder of the evening.

Lady Longwood went about canvassing for applauses for Honoria's duet, and Caroline's attitudes, in vain, and nothing but the hope of her usual excellent supper detained her disappointed company. At last it appeared; but Lady Longwood, determined for life or death on a classical evening, was resolved to have nothing more substantial than the slight refreshments of a continental party; and mammas and misses, who had been talking themselves hungry and thirsty in praise and wonder for four long hours, saw with horror the trays parading in, scantily furnished with lemonade, ices, cake, and jellies; not a drop of vulgar wine, or substantial eatables, to pollute the elegance of

the entertainment, that equally consulted economy and taste. "Spare fast, that oft with gods doth diet," need not have turned away from such a banquet.

All the party were now dispersed through the rooms in quest of refreshments, and some matrons did not scruple actually to examine and cross-examine the servants on the subject of the entertainment. The circle that had gathered round Zaira at first had now dispersed; but now that the room was almost emptied, Charles succeeded in stationing himself near her chair. He remembered Lady Longwood's whisper—she has come to Ireland in quest of a former lover. He watched her countenance, and though he involuntarily asked himself, why he felt such an interest in the examination, he did not dare to answer the question. At times he could observe a shade pass over her features, but whether from melancholy or thought, it was not easy to discover; and sometimes she appeared to listen with an

air of abstraction, which her brilliant eyes, and her eager attitude of attention turned to the speaker, seemed intended to contradict; and once, amid the loud applauses that followed her song, she sighed audibly, but this might be from fatigue; and Charles felt that the fatigue and constant excitement of one who was always called on for exertion, on or off the stage, might cause many moments of involuntary depression. At all events, he watched, though he dared not ask himself why.

Zaira was now conversing with a few who had collected round her, and who seemed to feel no less delight in the exertion of her intellectual powers than the circle had lately testified at her vocal ones; and the applauses that she now received seemed far more delightful to her than the noisy bravoes that had drowned the passages of her song they were intended to applaud. She did not say much, but enough to prove, that, had she said more, none else

would have had occasion to speak. She appeared to listen with more satisfaction than even she could be heard with; and there was a sweet and generous pleasure with which she listened to every observation that showed the slightest indication of talent,—the attention by which she tried to solicit, and the smile with which she delighted to reward it, that communicated all she felt, and made all around her feel the enthusiasm of genius, without its envy or its melancholy. Any one who had seen her glances of eager intelligence—her involuntary attitudes of admiration—her bend of profound attention, would have imagined her the secondary of some brilliant orb, instead of the centre of a system that borrowed all its brightness from her. The circle gradually deepened round her; the conversation had turned on dramatic subjects, and some of her auditors loudly expressed their admiration of her entree the preceding evening. Zaira bowed, but said, with inimitable and

unaffected naivete, that carries its meaning not to the ears but to the heart,—"How flattered I feel! long as I have been on the stage, I have felt a terror you can hardly believe at my first appearance. Last night, though I have appeared on almost every stage in Europe, I could have sunk into the earth with pleasure to avoid the 'burst' in which I was forced to enter."

"How is that possible?" said one of the hearers. "You who speak English with such purity, what could you have to apprehend? It is impossible but you must have been a native, or a resident at least, in these islands before."

At these words Zaira appeared visibly embarrassed, and the change of her countenance was visible through all her rouge. The speaker pursued the subject, and some one else said casually, "But you have the 'ars celare artem;' we would never have known your acquaintance with the classics, but from your comparison between the Orestes in

the Eumenides of Æschylus, and Shakespeare's Hamlet."

"Indolence, indolence," said Zaira, trying to laugh; "like the Laplanders, who, when a silver mine is discovered, bribe the discoverer to conceal it, for fear the Swedes should compel them to work it;" and she then attempted to follow the parallel she had been tracing between the characters of Orestes and Hamlet, but her powers of expression seemed suddenly to fail her, and she paused in obvious embarrassment; the current of her ideas had been evidently suspended.

Charles, who had stood near her chair, silent and unnoticed, ventured then to repeat a passage from Schlegel on the drama, and he added to it the remark of an English critic, that the characters of Electra and Hamlet bore a closer resemblance to each other than any that the ancient and modern drama furnished. He spoke in French, and his pure and elegant language derived

an interesting contrast from the timid tone in which it was uttered. Zaira, who till then had scarcely observed him, turned towards him with eager delight; and as he continued to speak, she expressed, in rapid but polite French, her surprise at such critical knowledge in so young a speaker. Charles blushed; "I am not the rose," said he, "but I have been near the rose."

Zaira continued to converse with him almost exclusively; she urged him to speak on the ancient and English drama, and she even condescended to say, that his knowledge of the German authors had given her new ideas; but she renewed her enquiries after the English drama, of which he appeared such a master.

"You must have read much," said she; "but when did the *slaves of the lamp* gather so rich a treasure in the subterranean palace of antiquity?"

At this moment (perhaps the happiest, certainly the most brilliant, of Charles's ex-

istence,) refreshments were placed on the table near which Zaira was seated, and bustling Lady Longwood scattered the circle to right and left in a moment, with hopes and fears about her fatigue, and extravagant unscientific praises of her performance, and importunities that she would taste the confectionary, the French names of which she ran over with a volubility that might have made Zaira believe she was at a restaurateur's in Paris; the cremes of every *kind*, and the marangles, and the limonade, the *very same* as that which had acquired immortal honour for "la belle limonadiere at the mille colonnes."

Zaira, taking some iée, assured her, that the pleasure of the evening had repaid her exertions; and added, rather speaking to herself than Lady Longwood, "never did I meet with such talents in one so young."

"Oh, my dear, dear Madame Dalmatiani!" said Lady Longwood, catching both

her hands with eager delight, "how you do enchant me! Could I have imagined my poor timid Honoria would have obtained such flattering applause—and from you?"

Zaira looked at her for a moment with silent amazement, and then recollected herself enough to praise Honoria as much as her conscience would let her. But her own thoughts were quite enough for Lady Longwood; and she glided away to repeat to her wondering, weary, incredulous audience Zaira's raptures about her poor Honoria.

"Dear creature," said she, throwing her arm on Honoria's bare broad shoulders in a fine *Sevignè* style, "how timid she is!—these praises quite overpower her—I feel her little heart beating so this moment."

"Oh, mamma!" cried the timid Honoria, twisting herself in no graceful attitude from under the fostering arm, "that odi-

ous bracelet of yours; it has torn my neck, and now you have got it entangled in my hair."

And, lo! as Honoria spoke, her mother's arm was too hastily withdrawn, and suspended to it hung an exquisitely turned ringlet, that had been carelessly, too carelessly it seems, twisted among the artificial flowers, and was—as artificial as they. Lady Longwood, "no whit dismayed," joined another circle; and hiding her involuntary "rape of the lock" in her ridicule, canvassed so successfully, that she was deputed to wait on Zaira with the entreaties for one more delightful air, which was to conclude the happiest evening they had ever passed. Zaira complied in a moment; but, generously anxious for others, she concealed it under a slight apology for fatigue, and declared herself willing to join any performers in harmony. The professional singers immediately crowded round her, and the splendidly bound volumes of

Italian trios unfolded their broad leaves on the table in a moment; Zaira, with polite humility, left the choice to any singer who would have the goodness to accompany her. At that moment, she saw Charles's eye fixed, with a look of intelligent delight, on the beautiful trio of "*Padre amato*," in Zaira. She sung what had been fixed on; but immediately after, called on Sir John S—— and Miss C——e to join her in the trio. Charles's heart beat audibly—the applauses were loud and long—Zaira looked around for him, and was disappointed—the sweetness, the richness, and the deep and mellow tones of her voice had overcome him, and he had turned aside to hide the effect which they had produced. Struggling with his emotions, he came forward at the close of the trio, but the fire of his dark brilliant eye was quenched. Zaira heard the bravos of the crowd, but she felt his tear. She rose a moment after, and Lady Longwood, hap-

py in officious trifling, called out, "Oh, those beautiful flowers!—that beautiful Parisian wreath!—Do you know it is just falling off—Will you allow me"——and she pressed forward to adjust the flowers in Zaira's hair.

"Oh!" said Zaira smiling, "I am not worthy of such an assistant;" and, taking the wreath from her head, she placed it playfully on a bust of Shakespeare that stood on a beautiful marble pedestal near her.

Charles, the most silent, but the most constant of her attendants, was close to her. "But," said he, pointing to the wreath, "the laurel is destined for poets—these roses are the flowers of beauty and love."

"Then on whom shall they be bestowed?" said Zaira.

"On their representative," said Charles, snatching them from the bust, and offering them to her.

Zaira took the flowers, and declining

the reference to herself, said, "Then you must have the honour of being the high-priest at the offering—I have a charming cast of the Venus de Medici—Do me the honour to visit her to-morrow evening, and crown *her*."

Charles bowed with speechless delight; but while she replaced the flowers in her dark hair, he could not help comparing its glossy braids, and luxuriant curls, bound with pearl, and entwined with flowers, with the flaxen ringlets of Eva, so unadorned except by their own lustre.

CHAPTER XI.

Proxima Circæ raduntur litora terræ;
Dives——ubi Solis filia lucos
Assiduo resonat cantu ————

VIRGIL.

CHARLES was hurrying to Madame Dalmatiani's the next evening; she had apartments in Sackville-Street; but so strong was the force of habit, and so unconscious was he of its force, that he found himself at Mr Wentworth's, in Dominick-Street, before he discovered his mistake. It is impossible to tell the mixture of feelings which governed him in his determination to enter, though his intention had been far from visiting Eva that evening. He knocked at the door, but his hand seemed to him

to tremble, and the knock had a hollow sound in his ear. Mrs Wentworth was at home; he entered the well-known room; Eva and her aunt were at work; the room was large; the dark-brown paper, two candles dimly burning on the work-table, the silent quiet figures that sat beside it, the shelves loaded with volumes of divinity, the still sombrous air of every thing; no musical instrument, no flowers, no paintings; what a contrast to the scene he had last witnessed, and to the scene he was hastening to!

Mrs Wentworth expressed her pleasure at seeing him, without any remark on his absence; Eva trembled with surprise and pleasure, but she never raised her eyes from her work. Charles felt something like constraint, and something like shame and fear in her presence,—that shame that arises from the consciousness of a broken confidence,—his engagement felt to him like

an injury to her; and as he gazed on her lovely cheek, in which the pure and eloquent blood had mantled so richly since his entrance, he said to himself, "She has no secrets—no thoughts that she might not disclose." Eager to escape from his own thoughts, he offered to read to them while they worked. "With pleasure," said Mrs Wentworth; and, pointing to the shelves, she offered him his choice of Sandeman's Letters to Hervey, or Boston's Fourfold State, or, if he wished for scriptural exposition, Gill on Isaiah, or Owen on the Hebrews.

Charles viewed them all with the blank eye of despair. "Is there not one human author here?" said he; and then recovering himself at the involuntary gloom on Mrs Wentworth's countenance, and the silent dejection of Eva's, he caught up a volume of Milton, and placing it before Mrs Wentworth, appealed to it playfully to plead for him.

"Let Milton plead for himself," said Mrs Wentworth, good-humouredly.

Thus encouraged, Charles ventured to read; and his eyes required but little aid from his imagination to transfer all that the first of poets has said of the purity, beauty, and the unearthliness of his female, to her who might have been her representative in all but fickleness. But as he continued to read, he was perpetually interrupted and obstructed by Eva's enquiries into the classical allusions with which it abounds, and by Mrs Wentworth's strong remarks on Milton's obvious tendency to *Baxterianism*—(now what Baxterianism was Charles did not know, and he chose to leave Mrs Wentworth in full possession, unexamined, of what it might or might not mean);—and at length he was completely chilled by the increasing horror and reluctance which they expressed at the free and frequent mention of the most sacred

names, and the familiar dialogue in which they are employed. Charles laid down the book; a long silence followed. Mr Wentworth's rap was heard; he came in hot from controversy at a religious party with whom he had dined. He drew from one pocket the well-known Letters of a Barrister, with Dr H——'s able answer; from another a scarce copy of Toplady's Controversy with Fletcher on Predestination; and thus, doubly armed, was proceeding to give his wife an account of a debate on "imputed righteousness," at the same time giving a hint of a bye-battle with Charles, by desiring him to glance over the Checks to Anti-nomianism, and give his opinion of them, when the clock struck ten, the signal for the servants to assemble to prayers. They came; and Wentworth, whether elated by recent victory, or from some fresh impulse of the spirit, gave an extempore prayer so long, that the conclusion of

it found all the family asleep except Mrs Wentworth, Eva, and Charles. Wentworth went round rousing them from their slumbers with no gentle voice or action, earnestly assuring them, that in the world of flames and torture, to which their carnal sloth was hurrying them fast, there was no slumbering or sleeping, and exhorting them not to close their eyes till they had prayed that they might no more be sleepy dogs, lying down, loving to slumber;—to excite them to which, he distributed a large handful of evangelical pamphlets among them, which they received with drowsy bows, half-closed eyes, and hoarse, inarticulate thanks.

Then Wentworth had leisure to turn to Charles. "And is this a new invention of Satan's to cover the heads of fools from hearing the word of God?" said he, taking up Charles's tasselled hat that lay on a chair. "You are going, I presume, to a

party, as they call it—that is, to a place where sinners assemble to shut their souls and ears against all that could save the one or pierce the other. And at what an hour do they meet! at the very hour when the people of God are supplicating for mercy in vain on the unthinking wretches! Well may such meetings be called deeds of darkness in the literal sense; and well does the Apostle couple murders, drunkenness, *revellings*, and such like."

Charles calmly took up his hat, and, bowing to Mrs Wentworth, he was going to retire. The dazzling attractions of his figure, embellished by dress, and perhaps animated by some slight suppressed feeling of passion, never were more resistless or commanding. Mrs Wentworth felt more for Eva than ever she had felt till that moment. There was a strong contrast between the brilliant figure before her, and the gloomy existence to which he

had devoted himself, and of which the gloom appeared to herself at that moment. "Stay with us," said she, "and we will try to make the evening pleasant to you—we have some other books."

"And is he going to a party?" said Mr Wentworth, who, like many angry people, had talked himself into a passion about Charles's engagement, while he did not think him engaged.

"I am engaged," said Charles.

"To the actress, I suppose," said Wentworth, intending only a virulent sneer, but unconsciously discovering the truth.

"I am engaged to Madame Dalmatiani," said Charles, in a still more hesitating voice.

Mrs Wentworth, retreating, seated herself in silence; Eva, folding up her work, rose to retire.

"Where are you going, child?" said Mr Wentworth; "the door is at the other end of the room; do you mean to go out through the wall?"

Eva, with the utmost exertion of her spirits, smiled, and went out through the door which she did not see. Wentworth and his wife looked at each other in silence.

CHAPTER XII.

——— Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rude shades did never breed.

MILTON.

WHAT a contrast in Zaira's apartment—lights, music, flowers, beauty, and genius! No effort to drag on the hours, and measure out time by stated employments; time seemed only measured by enjoyment, and life itself a kind of prescriptive title to happiness, (the best kind of happiness, intellectual enjoyment, combined with the most refined gratifications of the sense;) groups were conversing without effort, listeners attending without ennui or affected interest; music without any silence of weari-

some attention, or burst of disciplined applause; literature, and no pedantry; perfect ease, and no relaxation: the best poetry in all the languages of Europe was profusely, but not obtrusively, scattered round the room, intermixed with biography, criticism, and works still more profound: vases filled with flowers, and lamps of classical structure, diffused their fragrance and their light among volumes and busts; and Horace, Anacreon, and Moore, might have been here said to live amid roses once more. Every thing breathed pleasure, without laborious excitement; and there was all the spirit of society, without the mechanism of its forms.

At De Courcy's first entrance, it was easy to observe the truth of Lady Longwood's observation, that Zaira was not only independent, but wealthy; the number of attendants, and the splendour of her whole establishment, proved this sufficiently. And again the motive of her continu-

ing on the stage, and of her coming to Ireland, tortured him with irresistible solicitude. When he experienced this feeling, he said to himself, it is curiosity; but he already began to feel it was something more. Thus, in the first movements of the heart, we always try to deceive ourselves; we dread the approach of a power, whose influence we anticipate as *ungovernable*, as the warrior in the Old Testament said to him who warned him of the approach of an enemy, "Thou seest but the shadows of the mountains as if they were men," and tried to believe himself till he became the captive of those whom he derided as phantoms. As he passed through the rooms, the objects of delight and luxury around only struck him as assimilated to her taste, or indicative of her character. The books, the flowers, the instruments seemed to him like the embellishments of a temple, that announce the character of the deity to which it is dedicated; and in inhaling this luxuri-

ous atmosphere by which she was surrounded, he seemed to enjoy her presence in the objects over which its influence was effused, as seamen are said to know the coasts of Arabia before they are visible, by the fragrant emanations of the gales that are wafted from their shores.

She came in very late; she had acted at the theatre; but this had never occurred to De Courcy, who thought only of his invitation for the evening, and she did not wish him to be reminded of it; it was singular, that even already she did not wish to be considered by him as an actress. She passed through the rooms, conversing successively with the literary groups that filled them; she was evidently much fatigued, but her fatigue did not extend to her talents, and only gave a delicious languor to her voice and expression; it was still the sounding of Apollo's bow, though the string was relaxed. Her conversation, addressed to various professors of the arts, of poetry, and

of general literature, was varied to the subjects and styles of each. Like Cleopatra, she could give audience to the various ambassadors of her court in the native language of each.

At last she passed into a small room, where there was but a single groupe; this room was almost filled with flowers, and the light shaded by veils of muslin,—a light, that, like the mistress of the house, was most seductive, because less dazzling, made the company seem as if they were reposing in bowers by moonlight. Her harp was there; the party were conversing together, but there was an instant and deep silence, when throwing her white arm over the strings, she produced a few chords of irregular, but exquisite modulation. They all crowded round her, pressing her to sing, and Charles joined them; till, recollecting her fatigue, he condemned his own selfishness, and entreated her not to sing, in a tone

that seemed to contradict its own petition. The indifference with which she had listened to the other petitioners, was exchanged in a moment for an expression of interest, and a smile of the brightest, softest pleasure, wandered over her beautiful features. It is *Craterus then who loves the king*, said she to herself; but *Hephestion loves Alexander*, and she immediately prepared to sing. The air she selected was that remarkable one which Farinelli was employed to sing to awake the king of Spain from a state of gloomy and desponding abstraction, that threatened the loss of his intellects, and which is said to have been successful. It was simple and tender in the highest degree, and the murmured admiration of all the circle, and the tear of one in it, bore testimony to its rich and thrilling sweetness. At the close, she suddenly changed the measure, and striking the symphony of a gay Venetian air,

accompanied it with such rapid articulation and festivity of expression, that every foot trembled to join in the dance, to its light and lively measure.

"I appear like a trifler," said Zaira to De Courcy, when her song had ended. "I would not wish to appear so to you—but of the two sources of mental or physical excitement, contrast and association, the former is certainly the strongest, and I often have recourse to it to produce that excitement that is expected from me."

"And do you indeed think contrast the strongest?" said De Courcy; to whom this speech seemed to develope the light feeling of the continental women, who are always looking for a *coup-de-theatre* in whatever they do.

"No," said Zaira, thoughtfully; "Contrast appears to affect the arts, and association the feelings. In contrast there must always be surprise, and surprise produces a momentary vivacity of impres-

sion, unfavourable perhaps to deep feeling. But association forces reflection on us, by giving us leisure to collect and compare the minute and resembling features of which it is composed. Contrast excites emotion, but association leads to reverie;" and, as she spoke, her features assumed a shade that seemed suggested not by the reflections of the moment. De Courcy, to whom her pause was eloquence, did not interrupt it by a whisper; it seemed as if, in her last words, she had begun to speak of herself, and he felt as if her very silence was like reposing a kind of tacit confidence in him. "With the thoughts of our country," said Zaira, speaking in a still more suppressed voice, "how many associations are combined!—even in its recollections, though we can trace nothing but misfortune, that misfortune gives us a thrill like pleasure; and though when we return to it, we only expect their revival, we expose our wounds to its native air, with a hope that flatters,

though it does not heal. Does not one of the first of poets sooth even death with the recollection of our country?

"'Moriens dulces reminiscitur Argos.'"

VIRGIL.

"What would I give," said De Courcy, who thought her imagination was now wandering to the shores of Italy; "what would I give to be a native of that country which has a share in your recollection?—In joy we sympathize with strangers, but we lament only what we love. The green leaves, with which the ancients decorated the door in their houses of pleasure have long withered away, but to this day we find their phial of tears near the urns of their friends."

"What would you give to be my countryman?" said Zaira, rapidly; "and how can you tell you are not?" And with these mysterious words she quitted him, and urne d to a group near her.

A gush of delight thrilled through the frame of De Courcy.—*Her countryman!*—and then Lady Longwood's hint,—"She came to Ireland to look for a lover," recurred to him like the nights in the desert, when frost succeeds heat almost intolerable. And at this moment Lady Longwood's testimony, though he knew the futility of her character, appeared to him irresistible; for he felt that such weak worldly people somehow contrive to ascertain the motives of conduct much sooner than those who are guessing or groping their way through the maze of sentiment; to facts they go, by facts they decide, and they seldom are wrong, because they have nothing to lead them astray. "Can she then have come to Ireland to seek a lover?—Can Zaira's lover *be to be sought*?—Or, if such a wretch be, is he worth seeking?—Or, may she not find a lover?—Oh, what a madman am I!"

This mental soliloquy was over in a mo-

ment; he turned, and was surprised to find himself not alone, so completely was he abstracted; but when he turned, Zaira was conversing calmly with one of the company, who was pointing out that passage in Metastasio's works, where he deprecates the *improvisatori* talent of his country, as destructive of genuine poetical power, while he laments that he had himself been seduced in his youth to practise it.

"But you do not condemn this charming talent, which you certainly possess?" said the speaker.

"I believe, sir," said Zaira, rather coldly, "it is a talent that belongs only to native Italians," and she turned away.

Charles caught the words,—only to native Italians. Twice in one night, then, she had appeared to disclaim her being a native of Italy. Yet still, what could be her motive for visiting Ireland? At this moment young Longwood, the most un-

welcome of all intruders, lounged up to De Courcy, complaining of the damned bore of such an evening, and regretting that he had not accompanied his mother and sisters (for so he was instructed to hint) to the Castle that night.

"Nothing here but talking and singing. By heavens, she is going to sing again!" and he pointed to Zaira, who, yielding to the importunity of the company, was once more seated at the harp.

As she sat down, the beautiful wreath of flowers that was twined in her dark hair, became loose, and one of the roses fell on her neck, making a bright contrast with its whiteness. She attempted to arrange it, but did not succeed; and the graceful motion of her arms in this simple attitude, seemed to develope a new charm in this most attractive being, who could, in a moment, combine the extremes of simplicity and genius. She placed the wreath beside her.

"The season of the rose is departed with me," said she, glancing her dark eye at De Courcy; "but that of the nightingale still remains;" and she began to sing an Irish air. It was that beautiful one to which Moore's words have given new beauty—"Hath sorrow thy young days shaded?"

"She is all art and affectation," said Longwood, almost audibly, whispering De Courcy.

De Courcy was silent.

"Look at the attitude in which she bends over her harp—look at the attitude in which she turns to take that note from the servant. I suppose an order from the manager."

"But is that affectation?" said Charles, watching her changing countenance as she read.—"See how white her lips are growing.—See." It was not affectation, for before Zaira could finish the note, she fainted.

CHAPTER XIII.

How hapless is th' applauded virgin's lot,
Her God forgetting, by her God forgot!
Pleasure its gale, and flattery lends its breath,
To waft her smoothly to eternal death.

WESLEY.

ZAIRA'S female attendants were summoned; and the company, after some enquiries which none could answer, dispersed. De Courcy was at her door at an early hour the next day; he was told her indisposition was accidental, and that she was well; but he did not obtain admission for some following days, nor did she appear at the theatre for that week. During this period, it was his only employment to hasten to her door, where the same excuse was repeated; and to *call* every day at

Wentworth's. During the first part of his acquaintance with Eva, his steps almost unconsciously bore him to her uncle's every day, where he lingered till preparations for their early dinner made longer delay impossible. Now, on quitting Zaira's door, he was obliged to remind himself that he *ought to go*, and latterly to frame excuses to himself for not going just that day. It need not be observed, that very slight ones soon began to be sufficient. Thus a sentiment was rapidly assuming the form of a duty. Had his intermitted visits, or his abstraction been observed, he would have been happier; he would have had an opportunity of justifying himself, and this we always wish for when we begin to feel we want it. An accused person, too, always feels like an injured one, and we take pleasure in being accused by others in certain states of feeling, because such accusation assists us in escaping from our own. A scene of explanation would have shewn Eva, too,

in a new light, but it was one she would not appear in—it would have given Eva a new interest, but it was an interest she disdained to borrow. We love to have false motives imputed to us, that we may be willingly ignorant of the true; and the reproach of her pensive unaltered smile was the last he could submit to bear. He said to himself, "I love to gaze on the glowing colours of this wonderful being, but it is only that I may feel more refreshment from the pure green of another character;" but while he said this, he was aware that those who argue in metaphor seldom argue for truth; for every day he would have hung over those brilliant colours, had they been unveiled to him, and every day he forgot to *refresh himself with the green.* During this time, Zaira wrote to the most intimate friend she had on earth, a Madame St Maur, who lived near Paris, but to whom she never could prevail on herself to disclose the circumstances of her life, till she was at a distance from her.

She wrote to her, assigned the cause of her visiting Ireland, the hope that had sustained her there, till the night she had fainted on receiving a letter that crushed all hope for ever; and she concludes with these words, "What have I now to live for?"

Madame St Maur's Answer to Zaira.

1814.

"What have you to live for, ma belle Zaire?—Why, live to love; and unless you live to that, and for that, you live to no purpose, in my opinion, that is, in the opinion of any rational woman, any Frenchwoman, I mean. And so you would waste your brilliant existence in running after the shadow of—what!—a brat, that if it had had the good fortune to be born in Paris, would have found its way to *les enfans trouvees*, and never disturbed you by its cries from that to this.—Oh, my dear Zaire, at a thousand, or five hundred, (or I

don't know how many leagues—I am a wretched geographer, but I suppose it is at least a thousand leagues from Paris to Dublin,) I cannot stand the fire of your eyes—veil them, in mercy to me and all mankind. I cannot encounter the sublime and beautiful anger of their flashes even at this distance, though I see and feel you are arming them with all their lightnings to blast me for my last daring sentence. Turn them on your lovers, and spare me;—the fact is, (but I don't tell facts well) I cannot bear a child of *that Fioretti's*, and I can scarcely bear you for being fond of it. Now, don't you forgive me? a beautiful woman feels little difficulty in forgiving any abuse of her husband, that implies a homage to herself. But, seriously, my dear, I cannot comprehend this frightful story of yours, with such a father and such a husband. What a frightful father,—what an odious husband!—But they are dead, and so we need think no more about them.

"Oh, my dear, what a becoming thing

death is when the living remember it properly, that is, when the recollection gives a pensive grace (for a moment, no more) to the features, or a striking period to a sentence which no one finishes half so well as you, and therefore I will leave it in your hands; only remember, that the tear which your own Sterne so beautifully describes as giving a new lustre to the sword of Monsieur le Marquis de N——, would only *have rusted* what it *embellished*, if it had been suffered to remain on it too long. Take the hint, my beautiful Zaire, intelligent as you are beautiful, and remember that eyes bright as yours were never created only to weep.

"And so you are in Ireland—ah, take care—recollect that Telemachus, who set out in pious quest of a father, found himself wrecked on the island of Calypso, the island of Love! May this never be your fate, at least the wrecking part of it!—There was a vessel lately lost near

Dieppe, and every soul perished!—How dreadful—and how your genius might embellish the description; but I still tremble to think of a wreck even in metaphor. Ah, these Irishmen! they are dangerous beings. No wonder—they have, I am *told*, something of that ardour, that devotedness to the sex, that sentiment for women which formerly distinguished Frenchmen, and obtained for them the highest glory man need pretend to, that of being agreeable to women. But the terrible revolution has denationalized us, and our modern beaux do nothing but oil their Titus's, turn in their toes, and talk of horses—apropos of heads, or of wigs rather, which is just the same thing—I have seen one or two lately in the style of Henry IV.—awful phœnomena these! In other countries revolutions are intimated by signs more alarming;—in France by a change of the fashions. What will this come to? For my part, (no Frenchman or woman could ever speak of any thing without adding, for my part) I

am reconciled to any dynasty that will exempt us from conscriptions and taxes; quite of the sentiments of the Fauxbourg —— who, when the Emperor rode among them the other day, shouted, 'Live a thousand years, but give us peace!'

"Nothing but politics in Paris, that is, we never speak of them, but we pay it off with thinking. I saw the Empress in her carriage yesterday, she looked very melancholy; but such is the system of espionage here, that it would be dangerous to remark it. Why will princes lay snares by their looks? Amid all this we have one consolation,—justice, ample justice, is about to be done to the beauty of Parisian ancles; the petticoats are growing shorter every day, and, provided they do, no matter how long the political faces are. Do you know they say milord Wellington has actually crossed the Pyrenees?—the Pyrenees!—my God, but that is impossible. I would as soon believe Livy's foolish story about

Hannibal's having melted a rock with vinegar, after first heating it with an immense wood fire, while M. de Viosmenil shewed me the other day, that a few lines before, Livy says there was not a twig for fuel to be found in the whole region: And they say too, that the allies are making a *demonstration* toward Paris, and that in a few weeks we shall have Cossacks bivouacking in the Boulevards; but some people will say any thing. Can you believe them, then?

"Ah! should that event ever take place, what glory for France!—Doubtless, these conquerors, intoxicated, enchanted with the refinements, the elegancies, the unimaginable superiorities of the metropolis of Europe, would instantly confess themselves slaves, and Paris, covered with the glory of a sublime defeat, would behold her conquerors only to conquer them. Already I see the formidable Alexander flinging off his Russian furs, and thawing his polar ice in the glowing meridian of Parisian luxury,

and even the uxorious Frederick clasping to his bosom the *souvenir* of a Parisian beauty, instead of the urn of his broken-hearted queen I long to see them waltz; doubtless they will waltz if they come here. I am told the Emperor of Russia waltzes like an angel. Ah, can it be possible, and he has never yet seen Paris!—it is inconceivable—but then a few lessons. Yes, it is only in Paris that the *dieu de la danse* was ever worshipped as he deserves to be. I am told my style of beauty is exactly to the taste of Marshal Prince Blucher. Ah, my God! what associations, what anticipations! I am devoured by these chimeras of the soul; perhaps it was not only Roxalana's *petit nez retrousse* that was destined to new-model a dynasty. But before the Marshal is at my feet, I must give orders for altering my sandals; they no longer wear ribbons round the ancles.

"But to return to the Cossacks. I have been told they eat tallow, and drink train-

oil; tallow and train-oil, but this is inconceivable! Can you imagine it? But what an interesting exhibition! I am distracted between my fears of their visiting Paris, and my wish to see them eat tallow. My patriotism and my curiosity are producing within me the most frightful struggles; but a woman's curiosity is so much stronger than any other of her sensations. Adieu then, ill-fated love of my country; you must yield to that which overcomes every thing with me. I must see the Cossacks eat tallow, though I die of horror at the sight.

"Ah, what a calamity!—it is not the Empress alone has cause to look melancholy; our poor friend, Madame D'Orsange, precisely the day-week that she had buried her husband and only child, had her Angola goat stolen from her, and lost her incomparable Lury and two Java sparrows, by the perfidy of a friend who envied her superb aviary. What a dreadful event! but,

Heavens, what magnanimity, what greatness of soul!—she never shed a tear for husband, child, goat, Lury, or sparrow! She only ordered her coffee to be made a little stronger. But Heaven delights to try the virtuous with misfortunes; so I tell her, and she believes me.

"As to M. de Viosmenil and me, we go on just as usual. I never will marry him while my mother lives, and while my constant attentions are necessary to prolong that life, whose value increases every moment with its precariousness.

"You know I have been in the habits of putting her to bed for some years past. I was prevailed on the other night to go to a ball; quadrilles were danced as merrily as ever they were at St Cloud, by the Duchess of Abrantes and her party, while her husband was flying for his life from Portugal; suddenly a sentiment, an instinct (like Cinderilla's) told me I had outstaid the hour. I precipitated myself from

the seat—I flew down stairs—I rushed from the house. M. de Viosmenil followed me; every one thought we were mad. I reached home—I winged my way to my mother's apartment—I threw open the curtains,—'And are you in bed then, my mother?'

'I am, my daughter; but I could not sleep till I saw those beautiful eyes, which, close or open, I have blessed before I went to sleep these six and thirty years.'

"I wept—my mother wept. M. de Viosmenil was affected.

'Ah, my friend,' said I, extending my hand to him, 'can you promise me a pleasure like that you deprive me of, in tearing me from this beloved mother!'

"What a scene—what an effect resulting from the simplest elements of feeling!

"We wear a profusion of the most brilliant flowers in our hats; bonnets, the English would call them. Among them, I saw lately one or two white lilies; it was well

for the pretty heads that bore them that they were not seen, otherwise they might not long have remained on their shoulders. Adieu, beautiful Zaire; I embrace you, though at an immeasurable distance.

"DELPHINE ST MAUR.

"P. S.—After all, though the scene at mamma's bedside was very good, she need not have mentioned I was six and thirty before M. de Viosmenil."

CHAPTER XIV.

Baptisant son chagrin du nom de pieté.
BOILEAU.

WHERE was Montgomery all this time, from the moment that Eva had avowed or admitted her preference of De Courcy?—He had hid himself in the country, not in a romantic Beltenebros' spirit of exile, but with a determination to contend with and subdue a passion, which could no longer be soothed by hope, or sanctioned by principle.

But reports had reached him there, and he had now come to town, resolved to see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, and judge with his own understanding,

and few were better qualified for the task. He met De Courcy accidentally in Westmoreland-street; they walked on together —" How are the Wentworths?"

" They were very well when——"

" *When*," said Montgomery, laughing— " *when*—why, how long is it since you saw them?"

" Two or three days, I believe."

" Two or three days, and *you believe*?"—

" What needs this iteration?" said De Courcy, trying to laugh in his turn.

The forced sound of his laugh was lost in the thunder of a splendid carriage that was passing over Carlisle bridge. The young men looked up; a lady was in it; she leaned forward, smiled and bowed—" Her bow might, from the bidding of the gods, command." It was Zaira. De Courcy, gazing on her, forgot to bow; but the vermilion that suffused his cheek; the quickened lustre of his humid eyes; his shortened respiration, faltering step, and lin-

gering, long-reverted gaze, struck on Montgomery's very heart. They walked up Sackville-street in silence. "Are you going to Wentworth's?" said Montgomery.

"If you please."

"If *I* please?"

"My dear Montgomery," said De Courcy, more and more anxious for the temporary shelter of a jest; "my dear Montgomery, this stormy day, you are a strict observer of the Pythagorean maxim, when the wind rises, worship the echo; but, however, I am going to Wentworth's, whether you please or not; or even if you don't please—will that please you?"

Through this forced mirth Montgomery saw restrained pique, and his thoughts instantly found a new channel. De Courcy might have known his attachment to Eva, and this might be the language, not of indifference, but of jealousy. Whatever it was, he was resolved to hear it out, to trace it, if possible, through all its ambiguities of

darkness, and confront it in light.—"Εν φαεσι δ'ολλυσσον," said Montgomery to himself, referring to his own situation.

They arrived at Wentworth's: Now it seemed to be Eva's fate, that, just at this period, her uncle's house, society, every light under which she could be beheld, every association connected with her image, should be particularly and pre-eminently repulsive. Macowen was there every day, and all day long, defining, disputing, dogmatizing, hair-splitting, and excommunicating,—the absolute Pope of the parlour-conclave. His hearers, dazzled by his oratory, stunned by his volubility, proud of his reputation, afraid of his virulence, would hardly have denied that a crust was a shoulder of mutton, if it had so pleased Lord Peter to call it. It was ludicrous to hear these people, the moment they were allowed to speak (and that was not often,) break out into exclamations

against those who suffered themselves to be led by worldly teachers; or, as Macowen expressed it, suffered themselves to be harnessed to the old lumbering state-coach of the Hierarchy, that they might drag it over rough and smooth, under the lash of tithes-men and proctors, bedizened with the faded trappings of lifeless ordinances and beggarly elements.

This day, however, he was resolved that more than admirers should witness his triumph; he announced that he had lately been engaged in the conversion of one who had nearly been brought to *see the error of his way*, and whom he had invited to meet him at Mr Wentworth's, that he might "produce his strong reasons" before the godly friends who were assembled there. Mr Wentworth was just expressing his satisfaction, that his house was chosen for the assembling of the saints, and with twinkling eyes, erect figure, fluttered handkerchief, prelusive hems, and oscillating mo-

tion in his chair, was speaking, as plain as attitudes could speak, his agitation of delight at the expected controversy, when a loud rap was heard at the door. The party sat hushed in grim repose.—"He is but a babe in grace," said Macowen, with a preparatory leer of conciliation at the company, "he is but a babe, and must be fed with milk."

The door was thrown open—enter the babe—a man turned of fifty, six feet two inches high, broad and bulky in proportion, with an atrabilious complexion, a voice of thunder, and a tread that shook the room. The contrast was unspeakably ridiculous. "Babe!" murmured De Courcy; "Babe!" echoed Montgomery, and both had some difficulty in subduing their rebellious muscles to the placid stagnation that overspread the faces around them.—But the calm was of short continuance.—This Quinbus Flestrin, this man-mountain of a catechumen, came not to sit with low-

ly docility at the feet of his teachers, but to prove that he was able to teach them. If he was a babe, as De Courcy said, "tetchy and wayward was his infancy;" no ill-nursed, ill-tempered, captious, squalling brat, was ever a greater terror and torment in the nursery. He resisted, he retorted, he evaded, he parried, he contradicted, carped, and cavilled on the ninth part of a hair.

Macowen lost his ground; then he lost his breath; then he lost his temper;—scintillating eyes, quivering lips, and streaks of stormy red marking their brown cheeks, gave signal of fierce debate. All the weapons of fleshly warfare were soon drawn in the combat, and certain words that would have led to a different termination of the dispute among men of this world, passed quick and high between them. Struck with shame, they paused—a dreary pause of sullen anger and reluctant shame.—"Now, shan't we have a word of prayer,"

said Mr Wentworth, who had been watching them with as much deliberate enjoyment as an ancient Roman would a spectacle of gladiators.

"For Heaven's sake, ma'am, where is Eva!" said De Courcy in a low voice to Mrs Wentworth.

"Attending her school always at this hour."

"Her school?"

"Yes; a school of little orphans, whom she maintains out of her allowance principally; clothes by her own work, and teaches with her own lips."

"But I never knew this before," said De Courcy.

"Nor ever would from her," said Mrs Wentworth calmly—"her left hand does not know what her right hand doth; and she always contrived to make her absence appear accidental."

This was all she could manage to say—

for at the mention of the school Marrowen was off like a rocket; all hissing, blazing, and mounting, but not spent so soon. This same school had been a matter of argumentation, long, loud, and vehement, between him and the Wentworths. He had insisted that it should not be opened, and that the orphans should neither be admitted, clothed, or fed; till he, Judge in the Last Resort, had digested, compiled, and arranged the materials for their religious instruction, *in ordine ad spiritualia*. Now this was no easy matter; for his creed was shifting ever hour, not only in points of discipline, but even in matters of doctrine. His views, as he called them, were every day enlarging; and every day he had the same task to go over, from house to house, with his well-disciplined, patient audience, to convince them that his views were becoming more scriptural, and that in a short time he would form a system on the purest models of primitive orthodoxy.

They heard and believed, on the consoling conviction that they should all in a few days be apostles in their own right, by virtue of the patents issued from Macowen's genuine office. Now, this office of universal censor, Mr Macowen found it very convenient and desirable to be active in a particular department of, that of organizing a new charitable institution of whatever description; there his talents were displayed—his importance magnified; there he lived, and moved, and had his being. Endless were the debates, and countless the breakfasts and dinners eat for the good of the famishing objects, before Mr Macowen's eloquence, appetite, and sense of importance, were sufficiently gratified.

Against Eva's little institution he had infinite objections, as he knew no system of catechetical instruction pure enough to harmonize with his creed, and fit to be put into the hands of children who were to be brought up *in the way of life*. Thus half of the poor orphans must have star-

ved, and the other half been mendicants, the worst of mendicants, naked, lying, thievish wretches; rank in premature depravity, and earning the gallows with anticipated industry; lashed to vice by blows and curses, and robbed of its profits by callous veterans, that hunger might make them 'cute (acute,) while Mr Macowen was committing to flames much milder than those he condemned their authors to) the catechisms of Watts, Mann, Lewis, Stopford, &c. &c. &c.; and declaring, that no evil the children might suffer from the delay could be equal to the evils attendant on their receiving their religious impressions from any teacher whose tenets were unsanctioned by the word of God; which, (being interpreted) signified any teacher but himself.

Eva went on her own quiet way, not without frequent prayer to Him, who could alone further every good word and work, that He would consecrate her incapacity, and bless her feeble efforts for his

service; and in a few weeks saw round her ten little orphans, healthy, docile, and diligent, to whom she ventured to read the most elementary parts of Scripture, and invite children to "come unto Him who forbid them not;" while Mr Macowen was still, morning, noon, and night, searching up, down, and across all the book-stands in Anglesea Street, Ormond Quay, and the Coombe, for an old Lutheran catechism that the Queen brought to England in the year 1761, and of which his researches, after all, could not trace a copy extant.

Lo, therefore, at the inauspicious mention of this school, his ire burst forth, and blazed with terrific resplendency.—He was really eloquent—a natural orator; and he was now speaking for life and death—for the double interest of his eloquence and his importance, the credit of which had been much diminished in the late conflict.

Mr Wentworth joined him *totis viribus*;

for he had all a trader's natural invincible terror of money being laid out without value received; and, all-evangelical as he was, he would rather have seen his niece's contribution blaze in the front of a popular subscription, (Miss Wentworth 30, 40, 50 guineas,) or heard the thick well-rolled paper drop *full in his hearing* into the velvet-lined box of a collector at a popular charity sermon, where *Mr Wentworth and family's* well-filled seat drew every eye with expectation of ample donations to be recorded in public papers, than known how much *money was going* in her foolish whim about orphans; for, as he said, what good can be expected of orphans, who—who—do not go to Bethesda Chapel? A shrinking, nameless fear *of the objects** of the institution being known to her little pupils, had prevented her

* They are Magdalens.

bringing them to Bethesda Chapel.—This fear she did not, could not, avow even to her uncle.

The Babe also joined, for he was ashamed of the late altercation, and glad to make peace with Macowen even on his own terms. The motion for a "word of prayer" passed unanimously; and Macowen, proud of his acknowledged gift of supplication, and still prouder of his recovered consequence, was preparing, when De Courey whispered Montgomery—"Shall we visit the school?"

"Yes, certainly," said Montgomery eagerly; "yes, certainly;—let us go to the school."

"Now," said Montgomery triumphantly to himself—"Now, we shall see whether his heart developes itself, or whether he has a heart at all to be developed—Certainly, Mr Wentworth's house is not the place for the discovery."

To the school they went, but that was

not the place to develope De Courcy's heart. Eva was indeed there, with dishevelled hair, flushed cheek, and busy finger, pointing out lessons, and cutting out work for her little scholars, whose eyes, and fingers, and tongues, moving all in concert with hers, and all directed to her, mingled the singular appearance of eager intelligence with that of automatal mechanism. To Montgomery she appeared like our first mother, binding up the straggling and decaying groupes of flowers, and teaching them to bloom (Montgomery added mentally) unto life eternal,—To De Courcy she appeared—very unlike Zaira.

The business of clothing, teaching to work, and instructing to read, sounds beautiful and sublime in reading and theory, particularly when a beautiful girl, not fifteen, is the *maitresse*, and ten little orphans are half of them on her lap, and half of them at her feet; but the detail—the detail—no one but Eva herself could have

patience with them—De Courcy certainly could not.—Their dullness, their blunders, their stitches, taken horizontally, perpendicularly, diagonally, when they should have been taken in any and every other direction—their horrible confusion of the most sacred names in their religious lessons,—appalling to Eva's ears, revolting to Montgomery's, and ludicrous to De Courcy's—their dirty hair, nails, stockings, and skirts of stuff-frocks, for which they were gently and vainly rebuked by Eva, while they gazed at her with stupid eyes, fixed immoveably on the spotless white of her drapery—their looks speaking the concentrated spirit of childish envy, without a wish or thought of imitation—their *Babel of brogues*, where the drawling Munster accent was holding vain and perpetual war with the angular and exalted cadence of the North—All this, and more, and worse than all this—worse than "fables yet have

feigned, or fear conceived"—worse than could be imagined except by Eva, or some one in her situation, burst all at once on De Courcy's eyes, ears, and other senses. "Can a woman be more delightfully employed?" said Montgomery, as they retired.

De Courcy said, "Certainly not."—But he thought she might, more delightfully for himself at least,—a kind of refined selfishness had been stealing over him since his first acquaintance with Zaira.

Montgomery still continued to speak of Eva—of her worth—her virtues—her graces; and though Montgomery seldom quoted, he now quoted, and repeated with *emphasis*, more than with *good discretion*, Milton's "Ode to a virtuous young lady,"

"Lady, who in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunn'd the broad way and the green;
And with those few art eminently seen,
Who labour up the hill of heavenly truth—

The better part, with Mary and with Ruth,
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,
And at thy growing virtue fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.—
Thy care is fix'd, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame; therefore be sure—"

"Be sure—be sure—help me out, De Courcy; you know poetry better than I do."

De Courcy went on—

"Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends,
Passes to bliss at the mid-hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, virgin, wise and pure."—

And, as he finished, De Courcy burst into an eulogium on Eva, so warm, so loud, so elaborate, that anyone would have thought, instead of expressing his own feelings as a lover, he was trying to inspire those feelings into Montgomery.

Montgomery became silent; and du-

ring this pause, De Courcy, silent also, was at full, unwilling leisure to compare his feelings on his habitual, voluntary recollection of Zaira, and the necessity of *recalling* the image of Eva by an effort of duty, not of imagination. The thought of Zaira came over his mind, like the floating notes of some delicious music, whose remembrance we cannot exclude; but when he wished to think of Eva, he was compelled to praise her—to remind himself of her—and to talk of her to others, whose sympathy might assist his own. "Thank Heaven," said he to himself, as he ascended the steps of Zaira's splendid house—"Thank Heaven, we shall have no A B, ab, or E b, eb, lessons *here*—How can Eva"—His heart struck him, and he paused. Eva, instructing, clothing, and fostering her orphans, was indeed less brilliant than the beautiful, talented Zaira, the Aspasia, the Melpomene, the Calliope, the Terpsi-

chore, the enchantress of all eyes and all hearts; the bright full moon, whose glory filled and illuminated the whole sphere of his mind, while, "twinkling faint, and distant far," the image of Eva scarce glimmered on the verge—the utmost boundary of the intellectual horizon.

The first object he saw on entering the rooms, was—the last he would wish to have seen *there*—Montgomery—yes, Montgomery, *propria persona*, as quiet, thoughtful, and observant, in this fairy palace, as in Mr Wentworth's brown-papered parlour. Montgomery, by dint of strong interest powerfully exerted, had got himself introduced to Zaira's parties; and he had a motive which brought and kept him there, averse as he was, both from principle and habit, to such scenes and their inmates.

To De Courcy, his appearance there, everywhere, seemed the result of a deliberate system of *espionage*; and he saw, with

a feeling of resentment, aggravated by a consciousness, which was the more irritable, because it was guilty. He was determined to brave it out, and met Montgomery with dauntless eye, and cheerful, elevated tone—"Is not this a bower of enchantment, Montgomery?"

"Yes—and are you come here to play Rinaldo in this bower of enchantment?"

Zaira was standing with some friends at a small table, covered with illustrations in the most expensive style of modern decoration, and showing a beautiful edition of Horace (Wakefield's,) whose frontispiece represented the Bard with his lyre, surrounded by Nymphs and Muses,—

"Here happy Horace tuned the Ausonian lyre!"

said Zaira, as she pointed to his happy figure, that was displayed in an attitude announcing, with felicitous retrospective

intuition, the mixture of voluptuousness, indolence, and genius, that characterized the writer, who, at one time, is accused by his friends for not writing more than four times a year; at another, humorously satyrizes his book for its ambition of popularity; is always a lover of the country (*ruris amatorem*), yet always involved in the bustle and clamour of Rome, plunges into every depravity of luxury, and is, even in his adored villa, for ever singing and drinking—*sub arcta vite bibentem*; yet wishes himself born at that heroic period, when (if he had been born) his first and last sighs would have been exhaled at the *Templum Vagitale*, and "the world had wanted many an idle song."

"This," said Zaira, pointing to Ranier's Ovid, with its splendid sculptures, "this is one of my favourite writers."—("How does she like his *Ars Amatoria*," thought Montgomery to himself, parenthetically.)

"His landscapes are always graphic; when I read him I feel,

'Sunt rustica numina, Fauni,
Et Nymphæ Satyrique, et monticolæ Sylvani.'

His imagination fills all the landscapes of Greece and Italy with its brilliant population, and inspired our great Milton with the magic that enabled him to raise a Comus and a Sabrina amid the woods of Ludlow Castle."

One of the company "spake on that hint," and talked of "*gigantesca sublimita Miltoniana*," as sonorously as Algarotti himself.

"It is singular," said Montgomery, "that the classical satyr and the Christian demon should have exactly the same appearance."

All turned and stared at the odd, but just remark; and Zaira was pointing to Scott's description of the "Coir-nan-Uriskin," to justify the observation, when she

was led back again by De Courcy to classical subjects. With light and graceful, but steady steps, she traversed the fairy ground of classic mythology, and touched on the close affinity of its elementary topics to the Mosaic theology. De Courcy lifted his proud appealing eye to Montgomery. Montgomery listened, while she traced the difference between the simple sublimity of the description of the Deluge in the Mosaic history, and the puerilities, the affectation, the concetti of the classic authors on the same subject, from Horace's

"Omne cum Proteus pecus egit altos
Visere montes;
Piscium et summa genus hæsit ulmo,
Nota quæ sedes fuerat columbis,"

to Ovid's—

"Mirantur sub aqua lucos, urbesque domosque
Nereides, silvasque tenent delphines, et altis incursant
Ramis, agitataque robora pulsant"—

down to the flat iteration of

"Fulvos vehit unda lepores, unda vehit tigres."

"But," said Montgomery, "don't you think there is strong and just description in the line following—

'In mare lassatis volturis vaga decidit alis.'"

"By Heaven!" said De Courcy to himself, gnawing his under-lip, "he delights in contradicting her."

"I feel in those descriptions nothing so strong," said Zaira,—"nothing of that circumstantial evidence that the mind demands to reconcile itself to events that terrify incredulity. When Lord Byron tells us,* that, on the extinction of the sun, the noxious animals wandered among the dark-

* A gross anachronism—transeat cum cæteris.

ened habitations of men, 'hissing, but stingless,' I no longer float in uncertainties; the mind fixes its anchor in one terrible fact, and I almost believe myself present at such a period."

("No matter if you were," thought Montgomery to himself.)

Montgomery's last quotation of "*lassatis decidit alis*" had, in the mean time, given the hint to some talkers of the party, and they were off at a tangent on the albatross. That brought on Wordsworth's Ancient Mariner, where the crew of a goodly vessel all perish because one of them with

"His cross-bow did shoot an Albatross;"

That brought on the Green Bird of Paradise, in Thalaba, who had a human meaning in its eye; so on to the Simorg who dwelt at Kaf; to the birds who are linked by a hook and eye; to the footless fowl of heaven; Wilkins' feathered women, and Southey's Glendoveer, &c. &c. till they

fairly found themselves lodged with a Phœnix on the top of a pillar in "Egyptian Thebes."

In the mean time, Zaira, De Courcy, and Montgomery continued together; the latter watching, almost maliciously, for some developement of sentiment or character that would force open De Courcy's eyes. He expected, and almost wished, every moment, that she would commit herself by some sneer at revelation; some sceptical remark; some deference to French atheistical writers; or, at least, that she would go out of her depth in the stream of sentiment, and after vainly dabbling about in metaphysics to save herself, fairly go to the bottom.

No such thing. She passed on in unblenched majesty, and she did not utter a sentence which might not have been quoted as a proof that her principles of morality were as pure as those of her critical taste.—Continuing the subject of their late conversation, she spoke of the voluptuousness,

selfishness, and worldliness of the character of Horace, with obvious dislike, as if the character resembled some she had encountered in life.

"The great defect," she observed, "in the ancient writers, was their want of sensibility."—("Now for it," said Montgomery to himself—He was disappointed.) "Their pleasures," said Zaira, "are all physical; they never speak of the enjoyments of memory, or of music; their unfortunate mythology shut out that view of a future state, which alone can give dignity to our recollection of the departed; and their melan choly seems the depression of a libertine in the intervals of his indulgence, not that sublime feeling inseparable from genius, which is at once its reward and its punishment."

"They had, at least," said Montgomery, "an enthusiastic sensibility of rural pleasures; and where such sensibility exists, the taste is seldom wholly depraved."

Zaira smiled. "Even in that enthusi-

esm I trace rather the love of enjoyment than the taste for nature; enjoyment almost wholly *corporeal*. The natives of a glowing climate, they speak with fondness of shades, because they shelter, and of waters, because they refresh them. Horace's preference of the country is defended by a reason that suits a valetudinarian better than a poet; and the bare absence of the mention of moonlight (that light of the heart) in their writings, forbids me to think that their sensibility of nature was profound."

"Horace mentions it," said Montgomery, (who was in a bad humour because he had nothing to find fault with,) "in his beautiful vernal ode, 'Diffugere Nives.'"

"Yes," said Zaira; "but he sees only nymphs dancing by it, images of gaiety and pleasure."

And as she continued to speak, blending enthusiasm with critical taste, and enriching ancient literature with the diversified images and multiplied materials of modern

poetry, De Courcy rapturously applauded, and Montgomery reluctantly approved; and the former compared her, in his imagination, to those waters sprinkled on the ancient paintings of Herculaneum, whose affusion restores to their colouring, for a few moments, all its primeval beauty. "Which of the ancients is your favourite?" said she, to De Courcy.

"Virgil," was the answer; one lay on the table, and Zaira proposed their trying the *Sortes Virgilianæ*. Montgomery declined it. He thought it superstitious, and even profane, though he was ashamed to say so. Zaira opened at the ominous passage—

> "Vixi, et quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi
> Felix, heu nimium felix si——"

De Courcy opened on the lines—

> "Eja age, rumpe moras,
> Varium et mutabile semper fœmina."

Montgomery, on pretext of looking closely at the lines, held his pointing finger strongly on them, and fixed a searching gaze on De Courcy. Zaira was silent. De Courcy, ashamed of the effect this trifle had produced on him, began to relate *the* story of Charles the First and Lord Falkland, having tried the *Sortes Virgilianæ*.

"Yes, and I remember the event corresponded with the prediction in the cases of both," said Zaira; and this remark did not seem to dissipate the effect of the experiment.

Their attention was called away, fortunately for De Courcy, who could not bear the inquisition of Montgomery's looks, by a beautiful alabaster vase being brought in, which had been sent from Florence to Zaira. Many and eager were the debates on the subject of a groupe of figures in *alto relievo* that embellished it. Zaira, after some examination, proved that it was the adventure of Psyche after being deserted by her

lover; and while the antiquarians went off in Platonics about divine love and immortality, and souls and butterflies, and such "branches of learning," Zaira fixed De Courcy's attention on the beautiful melancholy figure of the abandoned Psyche. De Courcy gazed on it in silence; the emotion that he felt at a resemblance it suggested deprived him of all feeling of admiration, all power of praise. Zaira observed his altered expression.

"Can you trace a resemblance between that and any figure you have seen?"

"*He can*," said Montgomery, almost triumphantly.

"She must be very lovely and graceful," said Zaira, looking herself with unenvying loveliness on the figure.

"She is," said Montgomery, pursuing his triumph, "as lovely, as graceful, and as pure as that alabaster figure;" and as he spoke, Milton's image rushed on his mind:

"A rock of alabaster piled *up to the clouds*,"

"Vous parlez avec beaucoup d'onction," said Zaira, smiling. "What says Mr De Courcy?"

De Courcy said nothing.

"I myself," said Zaira, "am struck with the resemblance between this figure and that of Ariadne, in a painting you have not, I believe, yet seen. Allow me to show it you."

She passed on before them, taking a branch from the table to shew the painting. De Courcy, pausing, fondly pointed out to Montgomery the exquisite grace of her parting figure and uplifted arm, as she glided with attractive majesty before them. Montgomery, with his head turned over his shoulder, and his last looks fixed on the vase, only repeated, "Psyche abandonneé," and followed.

"What a perpetual fountain of domestic sweets," whispered De Courcy, pressing after her, "is found under your roof—in your presence—from literature to its most exqui-

site illustrations by the arts. I am ignorant, I know not how to express myself; but I feel I am in Paradise."

"I would wish," said Zaira, with one of those brilliant smiles that reflects the sunshine of a happy heart, "when you, I mean when my friends are here, that every hour should be marked by a new enjoyment, as some have contrived to measure their time by flower-clocks, whose bloom and fragrance succeeding each other, are their only marks of time." As she spoke, she stood opposite the fine painting of Ariadne deserted in Naxos;—"It is a French painting," said Zaira, "of the modern school; and in spite of all that Stewart has said, perhaps too justly, of 'marble flesh, drapery of satin spar, and the moonlight streams of milk,' I must think it a fine one."

And, her imagination led from the arts to literature, she repeated, with thrilling pathos, the beautiful lines of Aspasia, in Beaumont and Fletcher's Maid's Tragedy;

——This false smile was
Well express'd; just such another caught me!
These colours are not dull and pale enough
To shew a soul so full of misery
As this sad lady's was. Do it by me,
And you shall find all true but the wild island.
Suppose I stand upon the sea-beach now,
Mine arms thus, and my hair blown with the wind,
Wild as that desart; and let all about me
Tell that I am forsaken.——
——Strive to make me look
Like sorrow's monument! And the trees about me,
Let them be dry and leafless; let the rocks
Groan with continual surges; and, behind me,
Make all a desolation.

Zaira acted these lines as she spoke them, and one would have imagined there was something like a prophetic feeling in the bottom of her heart. The light fell full on the painting as she spoke; every one was gazing on her. Montgomery kept his eyes fixed on the figure of Ariadne. There was no theatrical exaggerated French expression in the painting. Ariadne, a striking

likeness of the Psyche, appeared broken-hearted, submitted, forsaken. Not even the exquisite lines of Beaumont, aided by Zaira's magical recitation, could give a stronger representation of all that a woman feels on the desertion of her lover, and all that feeling she sinks under, than this solitary figure.

"It is a striking likeness," said Montgomery, in a tone that could not be mistaken.

"Of whom?" said Zaira.

"Of the lady," said Montgomery, apparently whispering Zaira, while his eyes were strongly fixed on De Courcy—"of the lady Mr De Courcy is engaged to."

"Allow me," said one of the company, advancing to Zaira, "to take the branch from you; you must be quite fatigued holding it."

"Not at all," said Zaira, mechanically, and she retreated.

Through her rouge no unpractised eye could trace emotion; but the revulsion of her features, the instantaneous whiteness of her unpainted lips, the subsiding of her whole figure, a moment before elated, buoyant with dramatic emotion, and conscious of applauded talent, were clearly seen, and strongly marked by Montgomery.

De Courcy, who had not heard Montgomery's words, approached her with a glass of water;—she gently waved him off. He spoke some words to her in a low voice. She only bowed her head in answer; and a few minutes after, while the company, after a debate on Murphy's Phœdra, the only modern play that has attempted to record the misfortunes of Ariadne, all gathered round a young man of great humorous talent, (as it is called) who was singing the mock bravura of Ariadne, in Lewis's Adelmorn, she glided away. The conver-

sation soon languished, and the party separated in groups.

De Courcy, oppressed, agitated, and miserable, wandered from them without knowing where he went. He rested his burning temples for a moment against the pilasters of a small door that opened into a room filled with flowers, and wholly without light. He believed himself alone, till he heard an audible sigh near him. He advanced, and Zaira's white drapery gleamed among the flowers by which she was surrounded. He was at her feet before he felt the impulse that brought him there. The time, the place, the feelings that tore his heart, and made it feel alternately a desert and a paradise, gave him now a boldness like frenzy. He cared not what was thought, if *he* was but allowed to tell all he thought; in a paroxysm of feeling, half selfish, half-desperate, he wished to be heard, and to die. He seized her unresisting hand;

—unchecked, he pressed it to his burning forehead and lips;—unrebuked, he covered it with his kisses and his tears. Zaira, shocked, attempted to withdraw her hand; he held it more firmly; and at this moment, her repulsive motion, his own invincible timidity, left him without power to utter a word, but what belied his feelings and his situation. His language was only that of an inexperienced boy apologizing for intrusion, not pleading for and from the heart. "Zaira, are you offended with me? Do not be offended. The happy hours—the only happy hours in my life—the elysian moments that I have passed under your roof—in your sight—the intellectual existence—Oh, Zaira, it is only you have made me feel myself a thinking being! and if you are offended with me, if you drive me from you, I am annihilated, lost—nothing.—No answer? Zaira, speak to me. Only tell me you are not angry

with me. I was a wild thoughtless being—I never knew happiness till I knew you."

"Stop—stop," cried Zaira, vainly struggling to extricate her hand.

"No—never—never, by Heaven!—I was a neglected, overlooked being. You, you alone—you have awoke me to happiness—to life. Will you cast me off now? Oh, Zaira—angel—friend—more than all—woman—regenerate me by your genius—make me worthy of being your pupil—of sitting at your feet—of kissing them as I do now, with my heart prostrate before them. Zaira, will you not raise me? You weep—Good God, are these your tears dropping on my hands? and have I—*have I*—Oh, Zaira, drops of life!—Blood drawn from my heart would not give me such anguish."

Zaira collected herself. She calmly repelled him; and fixing on him eyes, which burned in the darkness around them, said,

with apparent calmness, and smothered feeling, "Why did you not tell me this before?"

"This—*what*?"

"May I not see your beautiful bride?" said Zaira, pride lending her voice a forced unnatural calmness; then her feelings overpowering her, she added, "Why may I not see her? I will bless her—love her—love her for your sake, dear—dear De Courcy!"

"Dear—dear De Courcy," repeated the intoxicated boy. "*Was it you—you*, that spoke these words, Zaira? Speak them again, if you would save me from"——

The voice, the warning voice of Montgomery, was heard from room to room, calling De Courcy, and exclaiming that every one was gone. Zaira rose, and was retiring; suddenly she returned, and placing within his hand a flower, whose name, it is said, in all modern languages, signifies "forget me not," whispered "*Ne m'oubliez*

pas," and quitted the apartment; the scene of a disclosure which both dreaded, perhaps as much as they wished.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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